From Knowledge to Wisdom

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Volume 2, Number 1, January 2014

David Publishing Company

ISSN 2328-2169

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Volume 2, Number 1, January 2014 (Serial Number 4)

David Publishing Company
www.davidpublishing.com

Publication Information:
Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management is published monthly in hard copy (ISSN2328-2169) by David Publishing Company located at 240 Nagle Avenue #15C, New York, NY 10034, USA.

Aims and Scope:
Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, a monthly professional academic journal, covers all sorts of researches on all aspects of tourism and hospitality management from experts and scholars all over the world.

Manuscripts and correspondence are invited for publication. You can submit your papers via Web Submission, or E-mail to tourism@davidpublishing.org. Submission guidelines and Web Submission system are available at http://www.davidpublishing.com.

Editorial Office:
240 Nagle Avenue #15C, New York, NY 10034, USA
E-mail: tourism@davidpublishing.org, tourism.davidpublishing@hotmail.com

Abstracted/Indexed in:
Database of EBSCO, Massachusetts, USA
Ulrich's Periodicals Directory
Library of U.S. Congress
Google Scholar
Academic Keys
J-Gate

Subscription Information: Price (per year): Print $320

David Publishing Company
240 Nagle Avenue #15C, New York, NY 10034, USA
Tel: 1-323-984-7526, 323-410-1082;
Fax: 1-323-984-7374, 323-908-0457;
E-mail: tourism@davidpublishing.org, tourism.davidpublishing@hotmail.com

DAVID PUBLISHING

David Publishing Company
www.davidpublishing.com

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Volume 2, Number 1, January 2014 (Serial Number 4)

Contents

Tourism Management

Hospitality Management

Others

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, ISSN 2328-2169
January 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1-5

The Sports-Recreational Animation as a Factor for Tourism Development

Zlatko Jakovlev, Cane Koteski, Snezana Bardarova, Mimoza Serafimova
University Goce Delcev, Stip, Republic of Macedonia
Kristijan Dzambazoski
Agency for Tourism Promotion of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Sports and tourism activities act together. So today, sports tourism is undoubtedly one of the most important industries characterized by ever increasing profits, almost without experiencing any shocks and repercussions of the global economic crisis. Tourist agencies, touristic facilities, and touristic places are trying in every way to animate tourists with some sports. Sport is fun for everyone. Modern hotels have pools, golf courses, playgrounds, gyms, etc., in order for tourists to do sports and to have fun. On the other side, tourist agencies organize visits to some (important) sports events for visitors to ride and to have fun. Hence, the objective of the sport is to animate the tourists. For example, the Olympic Games is a world most famous sports event where a lot of money is spent in order for visitors, who came for that event only to enjoy from all over the world, to have fun. Apparently, there is a link between sport and animation in tourism, and it is necessary to make investments in sport if we want to put more fun in tourism. Although tourism is not a sport branch, it covers many sporting activities (sports recreation, sports events, etc.). It can be concluded that tourism and sport are interrelated phenomena.

Keywords: sport, tourism, animation, recreation, development

Introduction

Although tourism is not a sport branch, it includes a lot of sports activities (sports recreation, sports manifestations, etc.). It can be stated that tourism and sport are mutually interrelated phenomena. The link between them has existed ever since the start of their development. But, the relation between them has changed substantially. In the ancient Rome and Greece, sport had motivated people to travel, in order to attend big sports events. In recent times, sport in tourism has got a wider role, and that has created a different relation between them. The famous tourism scholars Hunciker and Kraph have written about the functional interrelation between sport and tourism. They have explained the phenomenon of sport in tourism according to the examples of Swiss tourism, where the sport tourism had already been developed, especially the winter sport tourism.

Zlatko Jakovlev, Ph.D., associate professor, Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, University Goce Delcev. Email: zlatko.jakovlev@ugd.edu.mk.
Cane Koteski, Ph.D., assistant professor, Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, University Goce Delcev.
Snezana Bardarova, MSc., assistant, Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, University Goce Delcev.
Mimoza Serafimova, Ph.D., assistant professor, Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, University Goce Delcev.
Kristijan Dzambazoski, MSc., director, Agency for Tourism Promotion of Republic of Macedonia.

Sports-Recreational Animation

In contemporary tourism, sport has not only got a perceptive role, but it is also a relevant content of the tourist stay, which makes the visitors take part in different sports. It not only becomes a content of stay, but it is also an incentive for traveling towards a certain tourist destination. That kind of relationship between sport and tourism provokes the development of a special type of tourism: sports-recreational tourism (Bartoluči & Andrijašević, 1999). The sports recreation in tourism is seen as a means for an active vacation of the visitors, i.e., contents in which there is an active participation (Relac, 1979). Thus, we can conclude that sport and tourism have got many related points. The first one is that both of them happen in the spare time, which means that if a person does sports recreation in the place of residence, it is out of the tourism frame. But, if the person does that out of the place of residence, it is considered as a tourist activity. Thus, we can state that the sports recreation enters tourism when the residents from a certain place will take part in the tourist flows.

The second related point is the factors that influence the sports and tourism development. Many authors classify the factors for sports and tourism development differently. However, all the classifications can be simplified into three factors: factors of the tourist demand, intermediary factors, and factors of the tourist offer (Cicvarić, 1990). All of these factors influence the sports development, not only in tourism, but generally. Actually, that can be best shown by a parallel review of the factors for sports and tourism development in Table 1.

Table 1

Factors for Sports and Tourism Development (Relac & Bartoluči, 1987)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Factors for tourism development</td><td>Factors for sports and recreation development</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1. Factors of the tourist demand</td><td>1. Factors of the sports-recreational services demands</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(1) Objective
(a) Population
(b) Urbanization
(c) Income
(d) Free/spare time</td><td>(2) Subjective
(a) Fashion
(b) Behavior
(c) Habits
(d) Prestige
(e) Religion
(f) Love</td><td>Urbanization and industrialization
Income of the population
Free/spare time
Subjective factors (fashion, behavior, habits, and prestige)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">2. Intermediary factors</td><td>2. Intermediary factors</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Tourist agencies
Tourist associations</td><td>Tourist-sports agencies
Sports organizations</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">3. Factors of the tourist offer</td><td>3. Factors of the sports-recreational offer</td></tr>
<tr><td>(1) Attractive factors of the tourist demand
(a) Natural
(b) Anthropocentric</td><td>(2) Communicative factors
(a) Means of transportation
(b) Posts, telegraphs, and telephones (PTT) links</td><td>(3) Receptive factors
(a) Accommodation capacities</td><td>Natural resources
Sports-recreational buildings and contents</td></tr>
</table>

Note. Source: Bartoluči and Andrijašević (1999).

In that context, we are talking about factors from the domain of the economic and social life, which on the one hand, influences the need (the working and living environment, urbanization, industrialization, etc.), and on the other hand, influences the opportunity for action (free time, finance means, traffic capabilities, etc.).

The unity is also reflected into the functions of the two phenomena. The numerous functions of tourism and sport can be classified into two groups:

(1) Social or humanist;

(2) Economic functions (Cickovski, 1985).

The review of tourism and sports functions is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Functions of Tourism and Sports Recreation (Cetinski, 1999)

Functions of tourism	Functions of sports recreation
1. Social (humanist)	1. Social (humanist)
Sports-recreational Culture-educational Health-related Socio-political	Health-related Educational Socio-political
2. Economic functions	2. Economic functions
Currency For employment For a development of underdeveloped areas Multiplicative Conversational	Currency For employment Multiplicative

Note. Source: Bartoluči and Andrijašević (1999).

Considering Table 2, the sports-recreational animation can be spotted, and only the functions of the sports-recreational animation will be elaborated. Namely, one of the most relevant functions of tourism and sport in tourism is the health-related function. It is known that various programmes from the domain of sport and recreation have a positive impact on keeping and improving the visitors' health. The numerous researches have confirmed the thesis that doing sports and recreation helps prevent diseases which are present in the contemporary life, and it also promotes the functional capabilities of the organism. The health-related function is one of the most important incentives for traveling and change of the place of residence, considering the fact that it can be realized with the existence of natural resources (sun, water, and rays). Because of these reasons, it becomes an important impulse for tourist development.

Sport and recreation in tourism have a certain educational function, too. It is expressed through learning and acquiring certain sports skills, which not only broadens the educational level of the visitor, but also has an upbringing impact that is manifested by creating habits for doing certain sports-recreational activities.

As a result of the sports-recreational animation, during the travel and the tourist stay, people get to know each other and become closer, despite their social and other differences, and in that way, the social function of sport in tourism is established. Sport is always related to traveling to certain places, and along with tourism, it becomes "a peace ambassador among the countries". Besides that, the top sports achievements are the best means of promotion for certain countries. It all adds to the affirmation of the political function of the sports recreation in tourism.

It is well known that the economic functions are of extraordinary importance for the commercial development of the receptive tourist countries like the Republic of Macedonia. In that way, the economists favor the currency function. The economic functions of the sports recreation are realized through the consumption of different sports products in the tourist market and thus, additional economic effects on tourism are generated. It can be stated that both in sport and tourism, the key moments are the recreation, the laxity, the change of the everyday routines, etc.. The play and the communication are the basic elements in sports activities during the annual vacation, so the animation should be pointed out, too. Moreover, we should not neglect the recreational health-related aspects that appear as following elements.

The sports-recreational animation can be organized both on land and water, in a closed or open space. The sports-recreational animation on land in a closed space has its own pros and cons. The pros are that it is not dependable upon the atmospheric conditions (climate, season, etc.).

The only disadvantage is the space limitation. This group includes:

(1) Activities that do not require certain installations or equipment, like gymnastics, aerobic, yoga, etc.;

(2) Activities that require a little equipment, like table tennis, billiards, darts, etc.;

(3) Activities that require certain installations and equipment, like bowling, sports center, etc..

The sports-recreational animation on land in an open space is dependable upon the atmospheric conditions. This group includes:

(1) Activities that do not require certain installations or equipment, like mountaineering, etc.;

(2) Activities that require a little equipment, like badminton, different games with balls, etc.;

(3) Activities that require certain installations and equipment, like mini golf, sports playgrounds, etc.;

(4) Activities that can be realized on snow, like sledging, skiing, snowball playing, etc..

All the other activities that were mentioned before can be included in this group, too, because they can be realized in an open space, too.

The sports-recreational animation on water in a closed space (swimming pool) includes organized activities, such as swimming, water polo, different competitions, as well as different games on water.

The sports-recreational animation on water in an open space (a lake, a sea, a river, etc.) includes:

(1) Activities that do not require equipment, such as water polo, swimming, different competitions, etc.;

(2) Activities that require equipment, such as water skiing, underwater fishing, snorkeling, etc..

Sports-Recreational Animation Programmes

As it was mentioned before, there is a connection between sport and tourism. In the contemporary society, the two phenomena get a humanist dimension. The sports recreation is an active component of the tourist offer. It has an enormous importance to the health and psychophysical condition of people and their mutual interaction. Actually, we can point out that the sports-recreational animation is an imperative of the contemporary tourism. In order to create and realize sports-recreational animation programmes, certain conditions are indispensable: providing appropriate terrains and equipment, using the services of the sports-recreational centers, capability for organizing various contests and competitions, etc..

In that way, certain researches have been conducted in the Republic of Macedonia. They include domestic and foreign visitors and their desires for sports-recreational activities, and it has been found out that more activities should be included in the programmes. The contents of the animation programmes should be adjusted in relation to the type of tourism that they have been created for (for example in our country, it is possible to have summer, winter, lake, mountain, thermal tourism, etc.).

In our view, their content would be the following:

(1) Animation programmes for sports-recreational activities on water: swimming, sun bathing, flying over water, speed boat riding, rowing, water skiing, fishing, etc.;

(2) Animation programmes for sports-recreational activities on land: soccer, mini soccer, handball, basketball, tennis, golf, mini golf, billiards, aerobic, etc..

Conclusions

The contemporary trends in tourism require organization of the content of the tourist stay. The times, when the basic tourist services as accommodation and food were the only incentives for tourist flows, have passed. Today, these services are performing needs while achieving the goal, i.e., meeting the needs of the visitors. The two goals are complementary. It means that the level of achieving the first goal is in connection with the achievement of the second one. The higher the level of respect for the latter one is, the higher the level of realization of the first one.

From a marketing aspect, visitors' needs are oriented towards the higher diversity and need for a wider range of potential services. While in past times, food and accommodation were the synonyms of the tourist and hospitality business, in recent times, the two have become only an assumption, and less a goal of the visitors. The visitors will most often direct to those destinations that offer new experiences, events, and changes. The development of the product, as part of the marketing function in the tourist and hospitality business, leads to products for meeting the biological and physiological needs (food, accommodation, and personal hygiene) to products for meeting various activities. In that context, we can mention the degree of education which, in the research of the tourist motivation, appears as a relevant factor for tourist migrations. With the visitors' higher level of education, the tourist stay becomes more and more active, despite the activities that are included. This is a very important fact to the creation of the tourist offer, because the researches show that the tourist migrations include more and more people with a high degree of education. Thus, it can be concluded that the sports-recreational animation is a relevant factor for the tourism development.

References

Bartoluči, M., & Andrijašević, M. (1999). *Sports recreation tourism.* Animation in hotel-tourist industry. Opatija: Croatian Association of Hoteliers and Restaurateurs.

Cetinski, V. (1999). *Animation as a segment of modern tourism*. Animation in hotel-tourist industry. Opatija: Croatian Association of Hoteliers and Restaurateurs.

Cickovski, A. (1985). Hospitality as a carrier of tourism for Socialist Republic of Macedonia (Ph.D. thesis, University Center for Economic and Organisational Sciences in Rijeka, Rijeka).

Cicvarić, A. (1990). *Economics of tourism*. Zagreb: The publishing company "Zagreb".

Relac, M. (1979). Sports recreation in tourism. Sports Forums, Zagreb.

Relac, M., & Bartoluči, M. (1987). *Tourism and sport recreation*. Zagreb: Informator.

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, ISSN 2328-2169
January 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, 6-17

Assessing Sport and Recreation Programmes' Service Quality at Hotels and Resorts: Towards Enhancing Customer Participation

Lim Khong Chiu
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia
Radzliyana Binti Radzuwan
Universiti Institut Teknologi MARA, Perlis, Malaysia
Cheah Swee Ting
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia

Many issues and challenges are faced by the managers and professionals in managing sport and recreation programmes today. Although many previous researches on service quality provided by the organizations had been explored, very few studies pertaining to service quality in sport and recreation programmes in local hotels and resorts have been emphasized. This study aims to assess customers' perceptions of service quality in sport and recreation programmes and to determine the differences between customers' perceptions of service quality in terms of their gender and nationality. A total of 450 respondents from the hotels and resorts located in coastal areas of the northern Peninsular Malaysia participated in the survey. They were asked to respond to a series of the adapted service quality (SERVQUAL) items to measure five dimensions of service quality including tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy. Results from this study revealed that the customers' perceptions of the overall services in sport and recreation programmes provided by the hotels and resorts were satisfactory. It was also indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female customers' perceptions of service quality in sport and recreation programmes. Conversely, the results revealed that there was a significant difference between local and foreign customers' perceptions of sport and recreation services provided. These findings had implications on sport and recreation programmes in relation to designing effective management and marketing strategies at hotels and resorts.

Keywords: customers' perceptions, service quality, sport and recreation programmes, tourism industry

Introduction

Customers' satisfaction and service quality are closely related and crucial to the organization managers and marketers to design effective management and marketing strategies. A considerable body of research in the

Lim Khong Chiu, associate professor, School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Environmental Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Email: lkc@uum.edu.my.
Radzliyana Binti Radzuwan, senior lecturer, Sport Science and Recreation Unit, Universiti Institut Teknologi MARA.
Cheah Swee Ting, assistant researcher, School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Environmental Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

broader management and marketing literature has focused on the nature of satisfaction and its relationship to service quality and the future intentions of customers (Brady & Robertson, 2001; Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; Kang, Okamoto, & Donovan, 2004). However, there has been limited research in this field specific to sport and recreation context in Malaysia. A clearer understanding of how to produce satisfied customers in a sport or recreation setting will help managers to better predict the return of customers. Several studies support the notion that satisfaction is a consequence of service quality (Brady & Robertson, 2001; McDougall & Levesque, 1994; 2000; Zeithaml, 1988), and this appears consistent across service perspective (Murray & Howat, 2002). As such, the organizations and firms quite often use customer satisfaction and perceived service quality as a measure of product or service performance (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993) as well as a marketing strategy for the service industries (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1996).

In the sport and leisure literature, service quality has been conceptualized in different ways. Thus, differences exist relative to how perceptions of service quality are measured (U. Lehtinen & J. R. Lehtinen, 1991; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). For example, since its introduction, the service quality (SERVQUAL) (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1988) scale has either been directly utilized by many researchers or modified to tailor more specifically to the services of the fitness and recreational sport industry (e.g., Crompton, Mackay, & Fasenmaier, 1991; Howat, Absher, Crilley, & Milne, 1996; Mackay & Crompton, 1988; Wright, Duray, & Goodale, 1992). In addition, several researchers have attempted to develop sound factor structures of service quality for different segments of the sport industry (Howat et al., 1996; D. Kim & S. Y. Kim, 1995). However, empirical examinations of the sport, fitness, and leisure literature offer little to support commonly agreed upon dimensions of service quality to date.

According to U. Lehtinen and J. R. Lehtinen (1991), in the context of sport and recreation programmes, the targets of quality evaluation include: (1) the core service; (2) the physical context including the facilities and equipment in which service is provided; and (3) the interpersonal interaction in the performance of the service. In fact, a unique dimension identified by U. Lehtinen and J. R. Lehtinen (1991) refers to the quality of client participation in the production of the service, as client participation is fundamental to the production of most services in sport and recreation, and clients' perceptions of the quality of their own involvement are critical for continued participation in that activity. Perhaps, the increasing interest in service quality has motivated many scholars to research the topic. However, in the field of sport and recreation management, despite many related studies are conducted at the activities or programmes, very few studies have been published regarding service quality (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Yong & Pastore, 2004). Few research studies in this regard have focused on identifying dimensions of quality-specific services (e.g., fitness service, leisure service, and recreation service). For example, Chelladurai, Scott, and Hayward-Farmer (1987) identified five dimensions of fitness services as measured by their Scale of Attributes of Fitness Services (SAFS). These dimensions are primary-professional, primary-consumer, primary-facilitating goods, and secondary goods and services. The first dimension reflects the core service, while the rest dimensions reflect the context which encompasses the quality of the facilities, their location, the equipment, and the tools used in the production of the service as well as the amenities provided to the clients (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000).

On the other hand, based on literature review and focus group results, D. Kim and S. Y. Kim (1995) generated 45 items to assess service quality in sport in South Korea. They measured the desirability of the items as well as the delivery of the service indicated by the items (i.e., perceived performance). They derived an

11-factor 33-item measurement titled Quality Excellence of Sport Centres (QUESC). The 11 dimensions were labeled ambience, employee attitude, reliability, information, programming, personal consideration, privileges, price, ease of mind, stimulation, and convenience. In other related studies, Yi and Lee (2001) developed Korean Standard-Service Quality Index (KS-SQI) measurement, which balances the process dimensions and the outcome dimensions of service quality. They indicated that customer awareness of service quality is composed of process quality dimensions and outcome quality dimensions. They divided each of these categories into four categories. Process quality was divided into accessibility, physical aspects, credibility, and receptiveness. Outcome quality was divided into creativeness, primary needs fulfillment, unexpected benefits, and contact performance.

In addition, Howat et al. (1996) developed the Centre for Environmental and Recreation Management-Customer Service Quality (CERM-CSQ) scale to measure four dimensions of service in sport and leisure centres. These dimensions are: (1) core service, including programme information, range of activities, facilities comfort, value for money, and quality equipment; (2) staff quality, including staff responsiveness, staff knowledge, and officials; (3) general facility, including safe parking and facility cleanliness; and (4) secondary service, including food and drink and child minding. However, in an earlier research, Chelladurai (1992) classified sport services into two broader sets: (1) participant services; and (2) spectator services. According to him, an understanding of the sport services and their classification would facilitate the discussion of quality in those services.

Meanwhile, McDougall, Sutton, and Milne (1995) and Shilbury (1994) have also discussed service quality in professional sport. In fact, McDougall et al. (1995) developed the team quality (TEAMQUAL) scale consisting of 39 items to measure five dimensions of service quality in professional team sports. These five dimensions are patterned after those identified in SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994). As such, the dimensions are based on the idea that quality judgment is based on the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions. With the introduction of SERVQUAL, the scale has been widely used in various service industries (Yong & Pastore, 2004). While Cronin and Taylor (1992) acknowledged that the 22 SERVQUAL measurement items are appropriate, they argued that a model measuring perceptions of service delivery results is more appropriate than the gap's model, which relies on a difference between expectation and experience. Thus, using the same items as SERVQUAL but referring only to the effect, service quality, they proposed service perception (SERVPERF).

Furthermore, due to the difficulty in understanding consumers' expectations (with there being no clear set of expectations for each service setting), it is often argued that "perceptions only" as a measure of satisfaction (one that excludes expectations) is more useful (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2008). In addition, according to Lewis and Booms (1983), perceived service quality represents a more firm positive or negative attitude towards various service-related attributes. Therefore, from the practitioners' point of view, the explication of perceived service quality construct might appeal for more research interest, because it can be proven to be a useful management tool (Papadimitriou & Karteroliotis, 2000). Service quality is obviously very important for the long-term profitability of any organization (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Knowledge gained from such behavioral research will eventually help practitioners as well as researchers. It is vital for organizations' marketers and managers to know what motivates customers to participate in sport and recreation programmes as well as to fulfill their needs and wants.

Sport and Recreation Programmes in Tourism Industry

Sport and recreation programmes as part of business in tourism and hospitality are big, profitable, and growing, with most of the clients are sports' enthusiasts. Hotels and travel agents are always on the lookout for new markets as a way of broadening their business. Furthermore, fitness- and health-conscious baby boomers among the tourists who travel as part of their leisure or business have made a significant impact on all forms of travel and entertainment. People do not simply sit around on the beach on holiday any more, but increasingly engage in a wide range of recreational and sporting activities. This interest in recreation and sport has also been fuelled by the increasing emphasis of individuals on their health, well-being, and weight control, a movement which continues to grow at the beginning of the 21st century. Thus, recreational sport activities are acknowledged as important and potentially health-enhancing activities for which tourism can be the catalyst (Glyptis, 1991), and hence, health care and providing services for physical activities have become important parts of the tourism industry. Thus, the effective and efficient management of the sport and recreation programmes in the service sector (e.g., hotels and resorts) is crucial so that both the consumers and the organizations can prosper in the long term to bring positive benefits to all.

In the 21st century, the fitness- and health-conscious baby boomers, whose travel is part of their business, have made a significant impact on all forms of travel and entertainment. Airlines, car rental, and other travel services are yielding to the demands of the health- and fitness-conscious consumers. No smoking venue is now the mode. Vendors no longer consider heart-healthy food menus novel and bothersome. Hotels designed to market the business travel are expanding to provide fitness facilities (Grantham, Patton, York, & Winick, 1998). Historically, the 4- or 5-star hotels provided only a pool to accommodate family recreation needs. Now, hotels with fully equipped exercise facilities are becoming commonplace. The upscale hotels with an affluent guest market and convention trade frequently developed full-scale spa services to supplement their fitness facilities. Some are even attempting to become destination resorts where they provide golf, tennis, and spa services. Hotels without a direct access to such services as golf and tennis frequently develop joint ventures with clubs where guests may use their golf and tennis facilities on a preferred or reduced cost basis. Most hotel-based facilities combine a membership programme comprising local residents and nearby business professionals to complement the hotel resort clientele. In short, the traveling publics are expecting no compromise to their lifestyles when away from home on business or for pleasure. This trend will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

However, there are many issues and challenges facing the managers and professionals in managing sport and recreation programmes today. Although many previous researches on service quality provided by the organizations had been explored, very few studies pertaining to service quality in sport and recreation programmes in local hotels and resorts have been emphasized. In managing sport and recreation programmes in hotels and resorts, service quality should be defined by the customer's overall impression of the service performance, service delivery systems, and overall consumption experiences (Yong & Pastore, 2004). Service quality is recognized as one of the most important areas in the field of service management and marketing. Hence, in the field of service management and marketing, the related literature indicates that providing quality service is not only the most important factor for customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1994; Gronroos, 1990), but it is also the principal criterion that measures the competitiveness of a service organization (Lengnick-Hall, 1996). Thus, managers are now focusing on the process of service production and consumption,

as it governs consumer behavior in the service industry where services are produced and consumed simultaneously. In other words, the success of managing sport and recreation programmes may depend on the degree to which the hotels and resorts can satisfy their customers with quality services.

Nevertheless, the challenge for sport and recreation programmers in tourism industry is to provide leisure experiences that improve the quality of life of their sport and recreation consumers and to contribute to the development of their emotional, physical, social, and cognitive lives. At the same time, the sport and recreation programmers need to be aware of special societal needs related to race and ethnicity, sex and gender roles, disability, age, and related factors, with an emphasis on recreation's important role as a health-related form of experience and social service (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003; Torkildsen, 2000). In the context of this study, sport and recreation programmes refer to the full range of organized and structured leisure experiences offered by hotels and resorts, as well as the unstructured or unsupervised use of play areas, sports facilities, and other indoor or outdoor recreation settings. It may also refer to activities carried on throughout the year, during a specific season, for a limited term, or on a single occasion. This study aims to examine customers' perceptions of service quality in sport and recreation programmes at hotels and resorts in coastal areas of the northern Peninsular Malaysia. As such, the findings will create the challenge of providing and maintaining high levels of service, awareness of customers' expectations, and improvement in sport and recreation services and products in the hotels and resorts.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study was designed:

(1) To develop a demographic profile of customers who participate in the sport and recreation activities organized by the hotels and resorts management;

(2) To assess customers' perceptions of service quality in the sport and recreation programmes;

(3) To determine the differences between customers' perceptions of service quality in sport and recreation programmes in terms of their gender and nationality.

Method

A quantitative approach by using self-completion questionnaire of customers' perceptions was carried out at the selected hotels and resorts located at coastal areas of the northern Peninsular Malaysia.

Sample

A total of 450 respondents from 4- and 5-star hotels and resorts participated in the survey. A convenience sampling method was applied to select the sample from 10 randomly selected 4- and 5-star hotels and resorts located on the islands of Langkawi, Penang, and Pangkor. Convenience sampling refers to the collection of information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. It is the best way of getting some basic information quickly and efficiently (Sekaran, 2003).

Instrumentation and Procedures

The questionnaire was developed as a respondent-completed survey consisting of two sections. In the first section, the questionnaire was designed to gather respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, level of education, occupational status, income level, marital status, ethnic group, and residence). In the second section, the measurement items have been adapted from SERVQUAL (Zeithaml et al., 1988; 1990) and utilized to measure customers' perceptions of service quality in sport and recreation programmes. SERVQUAL is an

empirically-derived method that is widely used by a service-based organization to improve the service industry by understanding the target customers’ perceived services needs and measuring their perceptions of service quality for the services offered (Murray & Howat, 2002). In this study, the survey instrument took the form of a direct disconfirmation 22-item self-completion questionnaire. For each item, respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of service quality pertaining to sport and recreation programmes on a 4-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Scale items were grouped according to five key dimensions of SERVQUAL including: assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and tangible elements of the customers’ experience. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are defined as follows:

(1) Tangibles: the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials;

(2) Reliability: the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;

(3) Responsiveness: the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;

(4) Assurance: the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence;

(5) Empathy: the provision of caring, individualized attention provided to its customers by the organization (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1994).

The psychometric properties of the scales have been tested and the results have demonstrated good internal consistency and construct reliability. The results showed that the alpha coefficients for all five dimensions ranged from 0.83 to 0.87, well above the minimum value of 0.6 as an indication of reliability (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). This is consistent with Greenwell et al. (2002), Parasuraman et al. (1988), and Yong and Pastore (2004) who also measured service quality by utilizing the SERVQUAL items.

A total of 450 respondents who participated in the survey were asked to respond to the questionnaire provided. Permission to collect data with customers was received from selected hotels and resorts’ administrators. Questionnaires were administered by three trained enumerators for the purpose of data collection. Respondents who agree to participate were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it to the enumerators. Respondents were informed concerning the purpose of the study, general instructions were provided, help was offered when needed, and responses were anonymous.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Completed questionnaires from 447 respondents were included in the analysis. As shown in Table 1, the demographic profile of respondents was composed of 50.9% (224) males and 49.1% (216) females. With respect to their marital status, 61% (271) were married and 39% (173) were single. The age range of the sample was from 18 years old to 65 years old and more, with the majority of them being 26-35 years old (36.3%, 162), 18-25 years old (25.1%, 112), and 46-55 years old (20.2%, 90). Among respondents, 39.9% (177) worked in the management and professional fields, 17.6% (78) were self-employed, and 17.3% (77) of the respondents were still studying. Of the total respondents, 68.2% (304) were local Malaysians and 31.8% (142) were foreigners. In terms of education level, the majority of the respondents had obtained their bachelor degrees (42%, 183), and 30% (131) with diploma or certificate level. Meanwhile, the majority of the respondents were Malay (37.5%, 167), followed by Chinese (23.6%, 105), Indian (10.8%, 48), and other racial groups (28.1%, 125).

Table 1

Respondents' Demographics Characteristics (n = 447)

Demographic characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (*n* = 440)		
Male	224	50.9
Female	216	49.1
Age (*n* = 446)		
18-25	112	25.1
26-35	162	36.3
36-45	52	11.7
46-55	90	20.2
56-65	24	5.4
> 65	6	1.3
Education level (*n* = 436)		
Up to secondary level	77	17.7
Diploma/certificate level	131	30
First degree level	183	42
Tertiary degree level	45	10.3
Occupation (*n* = 444)		
Student	77	17.3
Self-employed	78	17.6
Unemployed	35	7.9
Professional & management	177	39.9
Retiree	18	4.0
Business	47	10.6
Others	12	2.7
Marital status (*n* = 444)		
Single	173	39
Married	271	61
Ethnic group (*n* = 445)		
Malay	167	37.5
Chinese	105	23.6
Indian	48	10.8
Others	125	28.1
Nationality (*n* = 446)		
Local Malaysian	304	68.2
Foreign (International)	142	31.8

Perceptions of Service Quality

An examination of the mean scores revealed that the customers' perceptions of the overall service quality provided by the hotels and resorts are satisfactory with a mean score of 2.967 from a maximum score of 4. Means and standard deviations for each of the dimensions used in this analysis are presented in Table 2. The results for the five dimensions of service quality show similar patterns with the mean scores for tangibles (M = 2.998), reliability (M = 2.966), responsiveness (M = 2.974), assurance (M = 2.989), and empathy (M = 2.928). These findings indicated that customers' perceptions of the service quality in sport and recreation programmes were moderately associated with customers' satisfaction pertaining to staff competence in carrying out the activities, performing the promised service, staff appearance, caring and courtesy of staff, and facilities

and equipment provided. Thus, the results of this study suggest the need for further improvement in sport and recreation programmes' services provided by the management of the hotels and resorts.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviation Distribution of Scores of Service Quality in Sport and Recreation Programmes

Dimension	*n*	*M*	S.D.
Tangibles	445	2.998	0.559
Reliability	442	2.966	0.582
Responsiveness	445	2.974	0.611
Assurance	444	2.989	0.620
Empathy	431	2.928	0.637
Overall service quality	431	2.967	0.542

The results in Table 3 indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female customers' perceptions of overall service quality in sport and recreation programmes ($t = -0.643$, $p = 0.521$). Likewise, in a separate analysis on the five dimensions of service quality, the results also indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female customers' perceptions. Based on the mean scores for each dimension, the results show that the service quality in sport and recreation programmes provided by the hotels and resorts received a better rating from the female customers. Thus, the findings of this study give a clear indication that both male and female respondents' perceptions are found to be of no significant difference in evaluating sport and recreation services provided by the hotels and resorts.

Table 3

Comparison of Respondents' Perceptions Scores of Service Quality in Sport and Recreation Programmes in Terms of Gender

Dimension	*n*	*M*	S.D.	*df*	*t*	*p*
Tangibles						
Male	224	2.957	0.597	436	-1.16	0.247
Female	214	3.019	0.518			
Reliability						
Male	222	2.941	0.621	434	-0.84	0.415
Female	214	2.987	0.541			
Responsiveness						
Male	223	2.951	0.643	436	-0.783	0.434
Female	215	2.997	0.579			
Assurance						
Male	222	2.990	0.656	435	0.025	0.980
Female	215	2.988	0.594			
Empathy						
Male	222	2.926	0.685	433	-0.026	0.980
Female	213	2.928	0.586			
Overall service quality						
Male	217	2.949	0.582	423	-0.643	0.521
Female	208	2.982	0.497			

Note. Significant value ($p < 0.05$).

However, on the other hand, the results as shown in Table 4 indicate that there is a significant difference between local and foreign customers' perceptions of the overall service quality of the services provided in sport and recreation programmes (t = -5.634, p = 0.001). Likewise, the results also reveal that there is a significant difference between local and foreign customers' perceptions of the five dimensions of service quality (tangibles: t = -5.560, p = 0.001; reliability: t = -5.156, p = 0.001; responsiveness: t = -5.170, p = 0.001; assurance: t = -5.275, p = 0.001; and empathy: t = -5.336, p = 0.001). Based on mean scores of the data, the results showed that foreign customers perceived a better service quality towards sport and recreation programmes provided compared to local customers. Thus, the findings could imply that the foreign customers are generally more satisfied when compared to local customers in terms of sport and recreation programmes' services at hotels and resorts. The findings seem to support the fact that cultural backgrounds do play an important role in influencing customers' perceptions of service quality, in terms of their evaluation on sport and recreation programmes. Meanwhile, value might be a mediator in perceptions of service quality (McDougall & Levesque, 2000). Value may be viewed as the evaluation of what is received compared to what is given in a service encounter (Zeithaml, 1988). Thus, in forming overall perceptions of service, customers may use value to evaluate the service compared to alternatives available to them, which, in turn, influence satisfaction judgments and future intentions of customers (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). Based on the findings, this study suggests that managers of the hotels and resorts need to develop some understanding of the needs and wants of the customers and their cultural differences, as well as their perceived value in sport and recreation participations in order to ensure that the provision of services is able to satisfy their customers.

Table 4

Comparison of Respondents' Perceptions Scores of Service Quality in Sport and Recreation Management in Terms of Nationality

Dimension	*n*	*M*	S.D.	*df*	*t*	*p*
Tangibles						
Local	303	2.892	0.566	442	-5.560	0.001
Foreign	141	3.199	0.484			
Reliability						
Local	301	2.871	0.589	440	-5.156	0.001
Foreign	141	3.179	0.512			
Responsiveness						
Local	303	2.875	0.642	442	-5.170	0.001
Foreign	141	3.188	0.525			
Assurance						
Local	302	2.887	0.639	441	-5.275	0.001
Foreign	141	3.211	0.517			
Empathy						
Local	300	2.821	0.655	439	-5.336	0.001
Foreign	141	3.157	0.530			
Overall service quality						
Local	294	2.869	0.551	429	-5.634	0.001
Foreign	137	3.174	0.456			

Note. Significant value ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions

Understanding the customers is essential to creating successful sport and recreation programmes. Knowledge of customers' behaviors can assist the sport and recreation managers in successfully meeting their needs. Perhaps, the most important is the need for an organization to position itself towards service with a basic knowledge of customer behavior (C. R. Edginton, Hudson, Dieser, & S. R. Edginton, 2004). In this regard, the focus of marketing activities in the hotels and resorts should take into consideration the customers' needs and wants in order to achieve its objective.

Generally speaking, the awareness of the importance of physical activity and fitness is at an all-time high in most of the societies today and will continue to increase in the future (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003; Edginton et al., 2004). Therefore, the managers will certainly have to stay abreast of the changes. If they are to deal with them, sport and recreation managers must be knowledgeable about the field of sport and recreation and be willing to assume leadership positions. Sport and recreation managers must understand these societal changes and plan their programmes and facilities accordingly. This will assist the organization in attracting and retaining customers.

The overall findings of the study have significant implications for leadership in recreational sport administration and management, particularly with respect to preparation of effective marketing and management strategies for the improvement of the daily operations of sport and recreation programmes in hotels and resorts. However, some limitations of this study need to be considered. The study was carried out in the hotels and resorts setting and was limited to customers of the hotels and resorts through non-random sampling technique for data collection. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to other settings. Therefore, it is recommended that an extended programme of research be conducted with consideration on sampling design and type of customers. This study also suggests modification measurement scales to be used to obtain qualitative data which may explain explicitly regarding customers' perceptions on service quality related to sport and recreation programmes. In spite of that, future research should also explore additional variables in terms of customers' satisfaction, perceived values, and future intentions of participating in sport and recreation programmes organized in relation to recreational sport industry, types of recreational sport activities, and other psychological variables such as goal achievement, self-efficacy, and other related attributes.

References

Allen, J., O'Toole, W., Harris, R., & McDonnell, I. (2008). *Festival and special event management* (4th ed.). Milton, Queensland: John Wiley & Sons Australia.

Anderson, E. W., & Sullivan, M. W. (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction for firms. *Marketing Science, 12*(2), 125-143.

Brady, M. K., & Robertson, C. J. (2001). Searching for a consensus on the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction: An exploratory cross-national study. *Journal of Business Research, 51*(1), 53-60.

Chelladurai, P. (1992). A classification of sport and physical activity services: Implications for sport management. *Journal of Sport Management, 6*(1), 38-51.

Chelladurai, P., & Chang, K. (2000). Targets and standards of quality in sport services. *Sport Management Review, 3*(1), 1-22.

Chelladurai, P., Scott, F. L., & Haywood-Farmer, J. (1987). Dimensions of fitness services: Development of a model. *Journal of Sport Management, 1*(2), 159-172.

Cordes, K. A., & Ibrahim, H. M. (2003). *Application in recreation and leisure for today and the future* (3rd ed.). New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill.

Crompton, J. L., Mackay, K. J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (1991). Identifying dimensions of service quality in public recreation. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 9*(3), 15-28.

Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing, 56*(3), 55-68.

Cronin, J. J., Brady, M. K., & Hult, G. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing, 76*(2), 193-218.

Edginton, C. R., Hudson, S. D., Dieser, R. B., & Edginton, S. R. (2004). *Leisure programming: Service-centered and benefits approach.* New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill.

Glyptis, S. A. (1991). Sport and tourism. In C. Cooper (Ed.), *Program in tourism, recreation, and hospitality management* (pp. 165-183). London: Belhaven press.

Grantham, W. C., Patton, R. W., York, T. D., & Winick, M. L. (1998). *Health fitness management: A comprehensive resource for managing and operating programmes and facilities*. Champaign, I.L.: Human Kinetics.

Greenwell, T. C., Fink, J. S., & Pastore, D. L. (2002). Assessing the influence of the physical sports facility on customer satisfaction within the context of the service experience. *Sport Management Review, 5*(2), 129-148.

Gronroos, C. (1990). *Service management and marketing: Managing the moment of truth in service competition*. Lexington, MASS: Lexington Books.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis*. New Jersey, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Howat, G., Absher, J., Crilley, G., & Milne, I. (1996). Measuring customer service quality in sports and leisure centres. *Managing Leisure, 1*(2), 77-89.

Kang, S. K., Okamoto, N., & Donovan, H. A. (2004). Service quality and its effect on customer satisfaction and customer behavioral intentions: Hotel and ryokan guests in Japan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 9*(2), 189-202.

Kim, D., & Kim, S. Y. (1995). QUESC: An instrument for assessing the service quality of sport centres in Korea. *Journal of Sport Management, 9*(2), 208-220.

Lehtinen, U., & Lehtinen, J. R. (1991). Two approaches to service quality dimensions. *The Service Industries Journal, 11*(3), 287-303.

Lengnick-Hall, C. A. (1996). Customer contributions to quality: A different view of the customer-oriented firm. *Academy of Management Review, 21*(3), 791-824.

Lewis, R., & Booms, B. (1983). The marketing aspects of service quality. In L. Berry, G. Shostack, & G. Upah (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives on service marketing*. Chicago: American Marketing Association.

Mackay, K. J., & Crompton, J. L. (1988). A conceptual model of consumer evaluation of recreation service quality. *Leisure Studies*, *7*(1), 41-49.

McDougall, G. H. G., & Levesque, T. J. (2000). Customer satisfaction with services: Putting perceived value into the equation. *Journal of Services Marketing, 14*(5), 392-409.

McDougall, G. H. G., & Levesque, T. J. (1994). A revised view of service quality dimensions: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing, 11*(1), 189-209.

McDougall, M. A., Sutton, W. A., & Milne, G. R. (1995). TEAMQUAL: Measuring service quality in professional team sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 4*(1), 9-15.

Murray, D., & Howat, G. (2002). The relationships among service quality, value, satisfaction, and future intentions of customers at an Australian sports and leisure centre. *Sport Management Review, 5*(1), 25-43.

Papadimitriou, D. A., & Karteroliotis, K. (2000). The service quality expectations in private sport and fitness centers: A reexamination of the factor structure. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 9*(3), 157-164.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumers' perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing, 64*(1), 22-37.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1994). Reassessment of expectations as a comparison standard in measuring service quality: Implications for further research. *Journal of Marketing, 58*(1), 111-124.

Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach.* Singapore: John Wiley & Sons.

Shilbury, D. (1994). Delivering quality service in professional sport. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 3*(1), 29-35.

Torkildsen, G. (2000). *Leisure and recreation management* (4th ed.). London: E & FN Spon.

Wright, B. A., Duray, N., & Goodale, T. L. (1992). Assessing perceptions of recreation centre service quality: An application of recent advancements in service quality research. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 10*(3), 33-47.

Yi, Y. J., & Lee, J. Y. (2001). A reexamination of the measurement and consequences of service quality. *Korea Marketing Review, 16*(1), 3-19.

Yong, J. K., & Pastore, D. L. (2004). Current issues and conceptualizations of service quality in the recreation sport industry. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 13*(3), 158-166.

Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Customer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing, 52*(3), 2-22.

Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). Communication and control processes in the delivery of service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 52*, 35-48.

Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1990). *Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations*. New York, N.Y.: The Free Press.

Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1996). The behavioural consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 60*(2), 31-46.

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, ISSN 2328-2169
January 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, 18-25

Women in Hotel Management and Leadership: Diamond or Glass?

Evangelia Marinakou
Royal University for Women, Riffa, Kingdom of Bahrain

Although the hospitality industry shows growth, only few women are found in high managerial positions. The hotel sector is dominated by women with an average 55.5% of the workforce, but is managed by men, as women are mainly found in positions that are stereotypically ascribed to their gender, such as directors of sales, housekeeping, and marketing. Fifteen male and 15 female managers in 5-star hotels in Greece were interviewed to explore their management and leadership styles, as well as any challenges they face in the career ladder in hotel management. The findings of this study suggest that women are equally capable to their male counterparts and they acquire skills that are considered to be more effective in the context of the hospitality industry. They are nurturing, better at communicating with people, they are caring, and they adopt supporting behaviors. This paper proposes that hotels that have women in managerial positions are more successful in facing the increasing competitiveness and adapt to changes more efficiently.

Keywords: women in management, leadership, hospitality, glass ceiling

Introduction

Tourism has been considered to be a major contributor to the Greek economy (Papalexandris, 2008) and is considered as a major employer with 659,000 jobs in 2004, representing 16.5% of the total employment in the country (International Labor Office [ILO], 2009). Nevertheless, women have the lowest female participation rate in employment in tourism in the country (Eurostat, 2009). Although research has been conducted in hotel management, very little research has been conducted to explore the position of women in hotel management and its effectiveness (Baum, 2013). In addition, Mihail (2006) suggested that there is a lack of updated empirical research on the position of women in corporate Greece. This paper aims at presenting the position of women in hotel management and leadership in the hotel sector in Greece. The main purpose is to present how hotels in Greece may benefit from the way women manage and use their talents and leadership skills in facing the challenges of today’s competitive environment which, as Erkutlu (2008) recommended, constantly changes and is characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability.

Women in Hotel Management and Leadership

Within this changing and challenging environment, changes in the workforce and employability are evident and required. Amongst other factors such as geographical and cultural distances (Nickson & Warhurst,

Evangelia Marinakou, head of Business, Faculty of Business and Financial Sciences, Royal University for Women. Email: emarinakou@ruw.edu.bh.

2001), the increasing numbers of women in employment have changed the face of hospitality organizations. According to the ILO (2009), over 200 million people are employed in the hospitality and tourism industry, and women represent 55.5% (Baum, 2013). Women employed in the hotel sector in Greece are found to represent 45.3% of the total employment, confirming that the sector employs mainly women (Eurostat, 2009). Nevertheless, there are few women found in high managerial positions (Li & Leung, 2001) and only in the last decade, women were allowed to climb the managerial ladder in Greek management (Mavridis, 2002).

Women in Greece have lower earnings than their male colleagues, and it ranges from 65% to 80% of the men's salary (Pettraki-Kottis & Ventoura-Neokosmidi, 2004). In addition, others claim that gender stereotypes persist in Greece and prevent women from attaining managerial positions (Vakola & Apospori, 2007; Pettraki-Kottis & Ventoura-Neokosmidi, 2004; Ntermanakis, 2003). The region may play a role in the gender attitudes, and perhaps the race and the ethnicity as well (Scott, 1995), as Mihail (2006, p. 688), for example, claimed that the gender stereotypes in Greece stem from the "patriarchal society of modern Greece". He also claimed that "women who aspire to managerial careers in corporate Greece are likely to face intense attitudinal barriers" (Mihail, 2006, p. 690). Organizations in a patriarchal society show "hegemonic masculinity" that refers to practices that legitimate the power of men over women (Thomas, 2005). Under these conditions, women are always in the position of being outsiders, of being "travelers in a male world" (Marshall, 1984, p. 25).

Additionally, it has been argued that women in certain situations adopt appropriate behaviors and roles adapted to the context in which they operate (Biswas & Cassell, 1996). In other situations, women have the opportunity to express themselves and operate according to their traditional roles (Brownell, 1994a; 1994b). Hence, as Kinnaird and Hall (1994) and Jordan (1997) suggested, the hospitality and tourism industry is influenced by gender stereotyping and therefore, there are certain types of work that women can do. They continued that women are mainly found in part-time or seasonal jobs in tourism. There are certain positions that are dominated by women and others by men. Still, women in this case hold positions that would not allow them to progress in the hierarchy and become hotel general managers (Woods & Viehland, 2000; Biswas & Cassell, 1996) or hold those that are poorly paid (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994). Nevertheless, women have started climbing the career ladder and nowadays are found in high managerial positions in hotel management.

Moreover, there are some characteristics or traits that hotel managers have. Thus, studies have focused on competencies required by hotel managers, and many different lists of required competencies are developed (i.e., Christou & Eaton, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996). Lockyer and Scholarios (2004) identified several personality characteristics in the services industry that are common with those identified in the hospitality industry and included characteristics such as courtesy, consideration, tact, perceptiveness, and good communication skills. In their study, Sehanovic, Zougj, Krizoman, and Bojanic-Glavica (2000), comparing male and female managers, suggested that women showed very good performance on organizational, financial, and management knowledge, manner with people, and knowledge of the economy. They also found that women were very good at organizing work and spotting problems, which they solved quickly. They suggested that both men and women at higher levels delegate authority less than they should.

Iakovidou and Turner (1994) suggested that high standards of maternal comfort and professionalism are required in the hospitality industry in order to develop and maintain good quality customers in a tourism destination. Li and Leung (2001) proposed that due to the lack of time and the varying work schedules, female hospitality managers do not focus on networking, training, and other related activities, which are valued if they wish to progress in their careers.

Maxwell (1997, p. 233) suggested that female hotel managers communicate better than male hotel managers, especially "in terms of having a deeper insight into and being more interested in their staff". She also suggested that women possess the management skills that are required by hospitality organizations. These skills include communication, flexibility, the ability to adapt, and teamwork. In reference to managers, Brownell (1994a) suggested that hotel managers delegate, motivate staff, and present information orally and in writing. She continued that they have become good at listening, as part of their communication processes, as well as an information gathering technique, in their effort to assess employees' concerns and the organization's climate. Furthermore, Gherardi (1994) suggested that female attractiveness is exploited within the hospitality industry. She proposed that in work teams, where female and male members are equally represented, the teams work better, showing greater productivity and quality of work.

The leadership qualities of hotel managers may help face the challenges in the industry and the constant changes which include "increasing globalization of the economy, the need to reduce costs, and the pressure to be competitive in a market where there are more global competitors" (Taborda, 2000, p. 41). In addition, Clark, Hartline, and Jones (2009) supported the view of Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, and Avci (2003) that leadership is important in service organizations, such as hotels, because it may create a transformational climate to enhance employee loyalty and maintain high quality of services provided. They also claimed that little research has been conducted on "the identification of the most appropriate leadership style" in the industry (Clark et al., 2009, p. 210). Furthermore, Galanaki, Papalexandris, and Halikias (2009) and Vakola and Apospori (2007), in their studies in Greece, revealed that there are gender differences in leadership styles between the two genders and that women seem to be restricted in management roles due to family responsibilities and their other roles. Additionally, research on leadership in hospitality has shown that transformational leadership can improve employee commitment, social behavior, and satisfaction (i.e., Marinakou, 2012; Tracey & Hinkin, 1994). Others, such as Gill and Mathur (2007), supported that empowering leadership improves hospitality employees' behaviors. In general, service managers should provide visible leadership to staff in order to help them accept the nature and the demand of the services provided in the industry (Clark et al., 2009).

In view to the above, it is vital to focus on the employment of women in hotel management and analyze their role and status in the sector in order to highlight the female management and leadership style in hotel management, as well as any opportunities and challenges which women face and which should be addressed by stakeholders.

Methodology

Management and leadership are social phenomena that rely on the subjective interpretations of both the leaders and their followers (Grint, 2000). Thus, the complexity of the phenomenon demands methodology that can provide access to data that reflect the views of both male and female managers in the industry. The qualitative approach helps to explore the way managers understand and make sense of their lives and how they manage day-to-day situations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, the researcher aspired to explore the nature of hospitality management and leadership through the eyes of the participants, by penetrating to the frames of meaning with which these people operate in the organizational context.

Therefore, empirical data are gathered with semi-structured interviews with 15 male and 15 female managers in 5-star hotels in Greece, which are chosen with convenience sampling techniques. The regions chosen for the study are those that have the highest concentration of tourism demand and are considered as

primary destinations in Greece (Papadimitriou & Trakas, 2008), i.e., Rhodes, Attica, Crete, Myconos, and Thessaloniki. The hotels belong to the 5-star category and to all types such as resort, city hotel, national or international hotel chain, in order to have a variety of participants and views based on different organizational structures and cultures, as it was difficult to find 15 female general managers in hotels in the areas of study. The semi-structured interviews had a conversational style so that the researcher could understand how each of the participants gave meaning to their work experiences.

The participants in the study are all Greeks. The majority of the managers in the study are single and do not have any children, which shows that despite their age and the fact that they are either married or divorced, the participants spend a lot of time on their careers and at work. The female managers are more likely to remain single and not have children in order to pursue a career. They mainly have undergraduate degrees, and only three participants hold a postgraduate diploma. All, however, have studies in hospitality and/or tourism management. The majority speak at least two foreign languages, as it has been identified as a requirement in hotel management (Christou & Eaton, 2000).

Thematic analysis has been performed to the interviews in order to answer the research questions. The interviews have been partially transcribed, and although Stelter (2002) claimed that there might be some challenges in using simple word frequency counts to make inferences, themes are developed not only from those that were more frequently discussed, but also based upon the relevant theory discussed in the literature review. Among others, the theme that emerged from the analysis and was discussed in this paper refers to the success factors mainly of female managers in hospitality management in Greece.

Analysis and Results

The participants expressed their views on three main topics as they emerged from the data analysis. Firstly, the glass ceiling issues in hotel management, then the leadership style that the managers adopt, and finally the factors that lead to successful management in the hospitality industry in Greece. The female managers in the study stressed the barriers they face and the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling phenomenon, whereas the male managers were concerned with the phenomenon, but only in reference to their female counterparts. Nevertheless, some issues on the glass ceiling are presented in this paper in an effort to show how female managers deal with them, as the focus of this paper is mainly on the leadership and the management style that is adopted.

In reference to the glass ceiling, male managers believe that it is more difficult for women to work in the industry, as it requires working long hours, sometimes sacrificing family and personal lives and more often moving around to different tourism destinations in order to advance. More specifically, one female manager (assistant general manager) admitted that she did not accept an offer to become a general manager, because as she said:

> My own desire to spend more time with my children will probably ensure that I stay where I am for convenience. I guess many capable women will not make it into the positions of influence for these reasons. Unfortunately, the women making it are usually childless and are therefore less aware of the work conditions that need to change.

Nevertheless, another female manager (general manager) said, “If you manage your time, then you can balance work with family”. These views are also supported by similar studies such as Ng and Pine (2003) and Knutson and Schmidgall (1999) who considered hard work and commitment at work as major contributors to

managers' success. These confirm Baum's (2013) view on the characteristics of hospitality management. He stressed hands-on work, operational control, and hard work in combination with frequent interaction with staff and other members of the organization as part of their tasks. Female managers in the study claim that they work many hours and sometimes more hours than the male managers, because they have to prove their skills. Although, the female managers that have a family find it difficult to balance work with family obligations, they accept the challenge and develop such skills and competencies that allow them to perform well. For example, one front office manager said:

> If you want to excel and advance, if you want your customers and the management to be happy, you have to be there whenever it is required. I may come in the middle of the night because we have 300 guests checking in. I will help with everything, even the bellboy to carry the suitcases…

Thus, hotel managers have to develop competencies across a variety of departments, offering more career opportunities and higher salary levels (Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien, & McDonnell, 2003). Interestingly, however, very few female managers expressed the desire to become general managers in their hotels, they desire to have a successful career, whereas the male managers have planned their careers and they showed their egos.

Sex and gender discrimination is still evident in the hotel sector, nevertheless, the situation is getting better, and women managers are given more opportunities to pursue a managerial career. This point was made by both male and female managers, and more specifically, a food and beverage female manager admitted that although it is difficult to penetrate the kitchen's male-dominated environment, it is possible with the proper attitude, behavior, and knowledge confirming the study of Knutson and Schmidgall (1999). Additionally, both male and female managers propose that knowledge of the industry, the job, and the prior studies as well as experience help them gain the respect of their peers and superiors. Further, female participants value more than the male managers delegation and sharing the decision-making with their staff. They propose that this allows them to have more time to spend on staff training and planning and organizing their jobs. For example, a female manager said:

> Within the industry, I have never felt my being a woman hindered my growth or the respect that I have received for my experience and knowledge. It is individuals outside the industry who will, for example, seek the acceptance of the male during a meeting instead of the woman, even though the woman is the decision-maker. That always makes for an interesting scenario!

Female managers in contrast to the male managers in the study claim that patience, smile, and humor may help deal with challenging situations and circumstances with all the stakeholders. Brownell (1994a) proposed that the interpersonal skills and determination are success factors in hotel management, and women in the current study are found to acquire these. In addition, female managers in the study propose that they should be as assertive as men, enthusiastic, and caring for their staff. Purcell (1996), in her study, also suggested that "the right kind of personality" is an important element (p. 18). Another success factor is to acknowledge the mistakes and apologize when necessary.

Further, female managers claim that they are trying to change today's management culture and style. Thus, they provide a more nurturing and accommodating environment. Therefore, they listen to their staff, they respect their opinions, and they discuss any problems at work. In this way, they encourage a team-based management style that generates more mentoring opportunities for employees through the environment and the working climate. Finally, they all claim that the culture is changing and women are given more opportunities to progress. This point affirms Powell and Graves (2003) who suggested that companies play a role in women's

success by adopting strategies to advance their careers or by erecting barriers that might prevent women from advancing. Although, Baum (2013) found that women in the industry are responding realistically to a situation in which they view an impossible future, female managers in this study are more optimistic about the current situation and the position that women hold in the Greek hospitality industry. They believe that they are not far away from placing women in top positions, as one noted that:

> It is true that women work very hard and they are more in the hospitality industry. You do not find many women at managerial positions, but the numbers of women are growing very fast. You find many female managers in big hotel chains mainly. I strongly believe that women are more effective, they have very good communication skills that are required in the industry, they make very careful steps, and they create very good reputation.

Evidently, male and female managers agree on some competencies and skills that are required to advance and progress in hotel management, but the two genders perceive differently the barriers and obstacles to their careers. For example, female managers value the relationships with their colleagues or supervisors, whereas male managers value their status in their positions, which affirms Iverson's (2000) study.

On the contrary, male managers believe that both male and female managers are equal and equally treated; they have the same way of thinking and professional values. When they get married, they both value their families and think that family comes first, and thus, for both, it is difficult to progress considering the patriarchic culture in Greece and the difficulties they may face with regard to their responsibilities towards family and work. Furthermore, male participants add that their female colleagues are as good as they are, and they have a bright future as long as they continue the hard work, despite the sex and gender stereotypes that persist in the Greek culture. Interestingly, one male food and beverage manager stated "make a woman's kind of work and it will be work that will blossom".

Implications for Hotel Management

The results of the current study provide directions for managers in hotels, as they suggest that women may be successful managers, although they face many challenges in their careers. As Powell and Graves (2003, p. 153) suggested, organizations should be ready to address any discrimination that occurs in the companies, especially "when they embrace stereotypical views or display prejudices towards members of one sex as leaders". Thus, they should use the legal framework that supports equality at work. They should provide female managers with the adequate policies to support them in terms of balancing family with work. Such policies include the leave of absence when people are getting married, when they have children, time off during their pregnancies, or time for their children, i.e., to get them to the doctor. Sometimes, however, the female managers in the study said that the employees, the other managers, and the top managers' behaviors may undermine these privileges. Thus, they do not take advantage of this policy, "only when it is necessary". Therefore, organizations should act to reduce these beliefs and attitudes towards female managers (Powell & Graves, 2003) and provide them with the environment to use their skills and talents that are found to be effective in hotel management. The culture in Greek organizations, including hospitality organizations, has an impact on female and male managers. The demanding and challenging environment forces women to think carefully before starting a family and to manage their personal lives so well that it will not influence their performance and productivity. Such stereotyping can be detrimental to their advancement, not only because they have to carefully plan their lives, but also because their employees perceive them differently, or it influences whether they will be promoted, further trained, or be given the opportunities to grow within the company.

This study suggests that as the hospitality industry faces uncertainty and fierce competition that threaten its effectiveness, female managers may be employed as they are flexible and may help the organization to adapt to new demands. The findings suggest that attitudes towards women as managers have changed and they may now undertake leadership roles, as their female traits are significantly valued in hotel management. Female managers have the skills and competencies required to succeed in this demanding industry. Further research may be conducted in other countries to explore the positions of women in hotel management and provide more general views on the topics and suggestions on how women may overcome the problems and the challenges as well as how hotels may create more opportunities for women managers.

References

Babakus, E., Yavas, U., Karatepe, O. M., & Avci, T. (2003). The effect of management communication to service quality on employees' affective and performance outcomes. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 31*(3), 272-286.

Baum, T. (2013). *International perspectives on women and work in hotels, catering, and tourism*. Geneva: International Labor Organization.

Biswas, R., & Cassell, C. (1996). Strategic HRM and the gendered division of labour in the hotel industry: A case study. *Personnel Review, 25*(2), 19-34.

Brownell, J. (1994a). Women in hospitality management: General managers' perceptions of factors related to career development. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 13*(2), 101-117.

Brownell, J. (1994b). Personality and career development: A study of gender differences. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 35*(2), 36-43.

Carbery, R., Garavan, T. N., O'Brien, F., & McDonnell, J. (2003). Predicting hotel managers' turnover cognitions. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 18*(7), 649-679.

Christou, E., & Eaton, J. (2000). Management competencies for graduate trainees. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(4), 1058-1061.

Clark, R. A., Hartline, M. D., & Jones, K. C. (2009). The effects of leadership in hotel employees' commitment to service quality. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 50*(2), 209-231.

Erkutlu, H. (2008). The impact of transformational leadership on organizational and leadership effectiveness: The Turkish case. *Journal of Management Development, 27*(7), 708-726.

Eurostat. (2009). *Tourism statistics*. Retrieved from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Tourism_statistics

Galanaki, E., Papalexandris, N., & Halikias, J. (2009). Revisiting leadership styles and attitudes towards women as managers in Greece. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 24*(7), 484-504.

Gherardi, S. (1994). The gender we think, the gender we do in our everyday organizational lives. *Human Relations, 47*(6), 591-610.

Gill, A. S., & Mathur, N. (2007). Improving employee dedication and pro-social behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 19*(4), 328-334.

Grint, K. (2000). *The arts of leadership*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Iakovidou, O., & Turner, C. (1994). The female gender in Greek agrotourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 22*, 481-484.

International Labour Office [ILO]. (2009). *Facts on the hotel and catering industry*. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/communication

Iverson, K. (2000). The paradox of the contented female manager: An empirical investigation of gender differences in pay expectation in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 19*(1), 33-35.

Jordan, F. (1997). An occupational hazard? Sex segregation in tourism employment. *Tourism Management, 18*(8), 525-534.

Kinnaird, V., & Hall, D. (1994). *Tourism: A gender analysis*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Knutson, B. A., & Schmidgall, R. S. (1999). Dimensions of the glass ceiling in the hospitality industry. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 40*(6), 64-75.

Ladkin, A., & Riley, M. (1996). Mobility and structure in the career paths of UK hotel general managers: A labour market hybrid of the bureaucratic model? *Tourism Management, 17*(6), 443-452.

Li, L., & Leung, R. W. (2001). Female managers in Asian hotels: Profile and career challenges. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 13*(4), 189-196.

Lockyer, C., & Scholarios, D. (2004). Selecting hotel staff: Why best practice doesn't always work? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 16*(2), 125-135.

Marinakou, E. (2012). *Gender and leadership in hospitality: Women in hospitality management and leadership in Greece.* LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.

Marshall, J. (1984). *Women managers: Travellers in a male world*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Mavridis, D. (2002). Cherchez la Femme—Women as managers in Greek corporates: An empirical investigation. *Equal Opportunities International, 21*(7), 21-36.

Maxwell, G. A. (1997). Hotel general management: Views from above the glass ceiling. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 9*(5/6), 230-235.

Mihail, D. (2006). Gender-based stereotypes in the workplace: The case of Greece. *Equal Opportunities International, 25*(5), 373-388.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data: An expanded sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Ng, C. W., & Pine, R. (2003). Women and men in hotel management in Hong Kong: Perceptions of gender and career development issues. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 22*(1), 85-102.

Nickson, D., & Warhust, C. (2001). From globalization to internationalization to Americanization: The example of "little Americas" in the hotel sector. In M. Hughes, & J. Taggart (Eds.), *Multinationals in a new era—International strategy and management* (pp. 207-225). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Ntermanakis, N. P. (2003). *Gender pay gap in selected industries and occupations in Greece.* Athens: Greek Research Centre for Gender Equality, Athens (in Greek).

Papadimitriou, P., & Trakas, T. (2008). *The changing face of the Greek hospitality market*. Retrieved from http://www.4hoteliers.com/4hots_fshw.php?mwi=3649

Papalexandris, N. (2008). Greece: From ancient myths to modern realities. In J. Chhokar, F. Broadbeck, & R. House (Eds.), *Culture and leadership across the world: The GLOBE book of in-depth studies of 25 societies* (pp. 767-802). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pettraki-Kottis, A., & Ventoura-Neokosmidi, Z. (2004). Women in management in Greece. In M. Davidson, & R. J. Burke (Eds.), *Women in management worldwide: Facts, figures, and analysis*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Powell, G. N., & Graves, L. M. (2003). *Women and men in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Purcell, K. (1996). The relationship between career and job opportunities: Women's employment in the hospitality industry as a microcosm of women's employment. *Women in Management Review, 11*(5), 17-24.

Scott, J. (1995). Sexual and national boundaries in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 22*(2), 385-403.

Sehanovic, J., Zougj, M., Krizoman, D., & Bojanic-Glavica, B. (2000). Some characteristics of women managers in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 12*(4), 267-270.

Stelter, N. Z. (2002). Gender differences in leadership: Current social issues and future organisational implications. *Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies, 8*(4), 88-100.

Taborda, C. G. (2000). Leadership, teamwork, and empowerment future management trends. *Cost Engineering, 42*(10), 41-44.

Thomas, A. B. (2005). *Controversies in management, issues, debates, answers* (2nd ed.). New York, N.Y.: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Tracey, J. B., & Hinkin, T. R. (1994). Transformational leaders in the hospitality industry. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 35*(2), 18-24.

Vakola, M., & Apospori, E. (2007). *Women and management*. Athens: Sideris (in Greek).

Woods, R. H., & Viehland, D. (2000). Women in hotel management. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 41*(5), 51-54.

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, ISSN 2328-2169
January 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, 26-39

Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification and Quality Mark in Hospitality

Diana Foris
Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania

This article makes a comparative analysis of hotel classification and quality mark in hospitality, aiming, primarily, to eliminate the confusion among these concepts regarding the role, the objectives, the procedures, and the purpose of these regulations and instruments used in the hotel industry. In this sense, the concepts of hotel classification (classification systems of the European Union (EU) member states) and the quality mark in hospitality (within the EU countries) are analyzed. The research methodology involved activities of collecting, processing, and interpreting information on issues of classification and quality brand in the hotel industry, nationally and internationally, using a vast amount of documentary material (books, studies, journals, legal regulations, Internet databases, etc.), making objective and analytical observations, theoretical analysis, benchmarking, and content analysis. The research results provide information which eliminates the confusion between the two concepts, providing clarification on the role, objectives, and procedures of the hotel classification purposes, namely, quality label in hospitality. Research highlights the similarities and especially the differences between the hotel classification and the quality mark in hospitality. The conclusions of this paper contribute to clarifying concepts: hotel classification and quality mark in hospitality, including important and useful information for the specialists in tourism and business operators in the hotel industry. In this regard, hotel classification is a coded form of synthesis of the comfort level and range of services, and the quality label is a model of good practices for implementation and certification of the hotel services quality. The classification system may be compulsory or voluntary (varies from country to country), while the quality mark is always voluntary. Classification of hotels is based on the star system (1-5 stars), and the quality brand is based on awarding the quality mark symbol.

Keywords: hotel, hospitality, hotel classification, quality mark in hospitality

Introduction

Taking into account that tourism consumers are more informed and more pretentious when it comes to the quality and quantity of the touristic services, we find that the classification of tourist accommodations, as well as the quality certification of hotel services, has become essential requirements on the tourism service market.

The classification of tourist structures represents an encoded form of synthesis of the comfort level and range of services and is based on reputation, moral climate, and a set of service standards.

The quality mark is a model of best practices for the implementation and certification of quality hotel services as a voluntary option in the field of economic operators in order to improve the quality of services

---

Diana Foris, Ph.D., lecturer, Faculty of Food and Tourism, Transilvania University of Brasov. Email: diobb@yahoo.com; diana.foris@unitbv.ro.

provided by the hotel units in order to increase customer satisfaction and ensure them that they will benefit in any hotel units assessed and certified by a high level of service quality, regardless of the category of classification unit.

Analysis of Classification Systems of Tourist Accommodation in the European Union (EU) Countries

Classification of tourist accommodation is a coded form which would synthesize the comfort level and range of services related to the specific category (Foris, 2011).

The objectives taken into consideration through adopting an official classification system can be:

(1) Customers' information;

(2) The possibility to distinguish tourism accommodation structures, by implementing differentiated policies;

(3) The possibility of a higher tax burden from the state to the products (luxury hotels);

(4) A possible tariff regulation;

(5) Facilitate communication, contract closing and monitoring, in the relationship between hotels and travel agencies.

Each of the world's countries, due to cultural and national traditions, appeals to a specific classification system, which prevents the application of a single classification system in the world (The European Consumer Centres' Network, 2009).

The criteria for classification of tourist accommodation, taken into consideration by OMT, are the following (The European Consumer Centres' Network, 2009, pp. 5-6):

(1) Comfort level:

(a) Superior (luxury, 4- and 5-star);

(b) Medium (3-star);

(c) Modest (1- and 2-star).

(2) Territorial location:

(a) Seasonal;

(b) Mountain;

(c) Climatic hydropathic areas;

(d) Urban;

(e) Rural;

(f) Outside the cities, close to circulated areas.

(3) Functionality motivation/length of stay:

(a) Transit;

(b) Special motivation (stay).

(4) System operation:

(a) Permanent;

(b) Seasonal.

(5) Exploitation method:

(a) Individual services;

(b) Associations (voluntary professional chains);

(c) Companies or groups (hotel chains).

(6) Ownership:

(a) Personal ownership;

(b) Private;

(c) Governmental;

(d) Joint;

(e) Public ownership;

(f) Public property of international concern;

(g) Time-sharing.

(7) Capacity:

(a) Reduced (small hotels, up to 150 beds);

(b) Medium (medium hotels, 150-400 beds);

(c) Large (large hotels, over 400 beds).

(8) Target:

(a) Business;

(b) Interest;

(c) Holiday.

(9) Service standards and offered facilities:

(a) Complete;

(b) Economic;

(c) Self-catering.

One of the criteria for the basic classification is the level of comfort, and it is composed of the following parameters:

(1) Surface (sqm) of the tourist location, of public spaces, rooms (according to the number of beds), the number of the touristic spaces, utilities;

(2) Conditions of offering suitable furniture, inventory, and sanitation utilities;

(3) The presence and type of catering services;

(4) Construction, access, and landscape;

(5) Providing technical services, including telephony, Internet, TV reception, the facilities with TV, fridge, minibar, safe, etc.;

(6) Possibility and offering of additional services.

To understand the essence of the classification of tourist system in terms of comfort level, the most important aspect is the regulatory activity of international practices, which are two different approaches in rule-making classification:

(1) Rule-making is ensured by the authorities/institutions of the state (the case of the national classification system);

(2) Rule-making is provided by the unions or professional organizations (e.g., Hotelstars).

In this respect, various authorities/public institutions, professional organizations, and companies assumed responsibility to elaborate rules and regulations for classification of the touristic structures.

Classification of tourist structures, as a coded form of synthesis of the comfort level and range of services, is based on awareness, moral climate, and a set of standard services.

According to the adopted classification system, countries can be divided into the following categories:

(1) States which do not have an official classification system (e.g., the Nordic countries)—justification based on the principles of freedom of the market and the objection of any form of intervention and control;

(2) States which do not adopt an official classification system, but which have a recognized informal classification system (e.g., the Great Britain whose classification system is introduced by two automobile associations: the Automobile Association and the Royal Club of Automobiles; Denmark whose system of "best practices" is introduced by "Politiken"; Switzerland, Germany, etc., the professional associations of hoteliers);

(3) States which have an official system of classification, more or less detailed (e.g., Romania, Italy, Greece, Holland, Luxemburg, Bulgaria, France—considered as being one of the most complex classification systems).

Considering that the hotel is the most important type of touristic structure, we will present types of hotel classification systems and the authorities/organizations responsible for their implementation in the member states of the EU (see Table 1).

Table 1

Types of Hotel Classification Systems of Hotels and Authorized Authorities/Organizations of Member States of the EU

No.	Country	Type of hotel classification system	Responsible authorities/organizations' comment
1	Austria	Voluntary national system (optional)	Hotelstars system through Austrian Professional Hotel Association
2	Belgium	Mandatory official regional system	The Flemish part: Tourisme Vlaanderen The Walloon part: The General Commissary of Tourism Brussels: French Community Commission, Commissary for Tourism
3	Bulgaria	Mandatory official national system	State Agency for Tourism under the Ministry of Economy
4	Cyprus	Mandatory official national system	National Tourism Organization of Cyprus
5	Czech Republic	Voluntary national system (optional)	Hotelstars system through National Association of Hotels and Restaurants of Czech Republic
6	Croatia	Mandatory official national system	Ministry of Tourism
7	Denmark	Mandatory national system of "good practices" for Horesta members	National Association of Hotels, Restaurants, and Tourism Activities (hotels should have a minimum capacity of 40 beds)
8	Estonia	Mandatory national system Voluntary national system (optional)	Local public authorities (urban and rural) Hotelstars system from 2011
9	Finland	Does not have a classification system	Websites and feedback from tourists (there is no objective criterion)
10	France	Voluntary national system (optional) from June 2009 Until June 2009, there was a mandatory national system	Legal regulation of the classification system can be found in the Code of Tourism Classification is performed by Atout France—France Tourism Development Agency
11	Germany	Voluntary national system (optional)	Hotelstars system through Deutsche Hotel-und Gasttattenverband—Federal Confederation of German Hotels and Restaurants
12	Greece	Mandatory official national system	National Organization of Tourism
13	Ireland	Mandatory official national system	Failte Ireland—state organism
14	Italy	Mandatory official regional system	Regional authorities of autonomous provinces
15	Latvia	Voluntary national system (optional)	LLC—Hotel and Restaurant Centre

(Table 1 continued)

No.	Country	Type of hotel classification system	Responsible authorities/organizations' comment
16	Lithuania	Mandatory official national system	Classification Commission of Accommodation Services within the State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy
17	Luxembourg	Voluntary national system (optional)	Benelux Hotel Classification System through the Ministry of Tourism
18	Malta	Mandatory official national system	The Authority for Tourism of Malta
19	Great Britain	Voluntary national system (optional)	Board of Tourism in England—Quality in Tourism, AA Hotel Services
20	Holland	Voluntary national system (optional)	Hotelstars system through the Dutch hotel and catering associated companies
21	Poland	Mandatory official national system	Ministry of Sport and Tourism, respectively, Voivodeship Marshal in Warsaw
22	Portugal	Mandatory official national system	Tourism of Portugal (National Authority for Tourism of Portugal) under the authority of Ministry of Economy, Innovation, and Development
23	Romania	Mandatory official national system	Ministry of Economy through the National Authority for Tourism
24	Slovakia	Mandatory official national system	Ministry of Economy
25	Slovenia	Mandatory official national system	Board of Tourism in Slovenia
26	Spain	Mandatory official regional system	In each region (community) autonomous
27	Sweden	Voluntary national system (optional)	Starting with 2010—Hotelstars system through the classification committee of Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHR)
28	Hungary	Mandatory national system Voluntary national system (optional)	Mandatory national system through the Office of Licensing of Activities and Professions in Hungary Hotelstars system through the Hotel Association of Hungary from 2010

Note. Source: Foris (2010).

Analyzing the existence of the hotel classification system in the member states of the EU, we find the presence of a classification system in 27 of the countries, where only Finland has not adopted such a system.

The analysis of the hotel classification system adopted in the EU member states, in terms of its nature, reveals that 17 states have a formal system of classification, thus identifying the existence of a self-regulated system in 11 states and in Finland no system (voluntary informal or no) adopted.

Analyzing the hotel classification system adopted in the EU member states, in terms of division of powers in regulating the classification system, we find that in most countries, there are national regulations, only in Belgium, Spain, and Italy, we meet regional regulations, and in Finland, there is no regulation of this nature.

At the EU, we identify the countries that have acceded to the classification system Hotelstars: starting with 2010, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Hungary (in 2010) as well as the Netherlands, Estonia (since 2011). The same system was applied in Switzerland since 2011.

Under the HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants, & Cafes in Europe) patronage, hotel associations of Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, and Switzerland have created the Hotelstars Union, partnership that follows a harmonious classification of hotels, based on similar criteria and procedures, applied in the mentioned countries.

Hotelstars classification system was launched on September 14, 2009, during a conference in Prague, being presented in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Hungary, and Estonia.

Not only do the classification systems vary from state to state, but there is also a significant diversity of types of tourist accommodation structures.

We will present the types of structures with functions of tourist accommodation and their classification categories used in the member states of the EU (see Table 2).

Table 2

Types of Tourist Accommodation Structures and Classification Categories Used in Different States of the EU

No.	Country	Type of tourist accommodation structures	Classification category/type of structures
1	Austria	Hotels, guest houses, pensions, Hotel Garni (bed and breakfast (B&B)), and apartments	Hotels: 1-5 stars
2	Belgium	Hotels, guest rooms, recreation fields, vacation complex, and motels	Hotels: 1-5 stars
3	Bulgaria	Hotels, motels, vacation complex, family hotels, bungalows and camping sites, houses for rent, separated rooms, vacation houses and houses	Hotels: 1-5 stars Motels: 1-3 stars Vacation complex: 3-5 stars Family hotels: 1-3 stars Bungalows and camping sites: 1-2 stars Houses for rent: 1-3 stars Separated rooms, vacation houses and houses: 1-3 stars
4	Cyprus	Hotels, hotel apartments, touristic villages, touristic villas, camping sites, traditional houses (hotel and hotel apartments), and touristic apartments	Hotels: 1-5 stars Hotel apartments, touristic villages, and touristic villas: deluxe, A, B, and C categories Camping sites: A and B categories Traditional houses (classified as hotels and hotel apartments) Touristic apartments: without stars Other categories: hotels without stars and guest houses
5	Czech Republic	Hotels, motels, pensions, camping sites, cabins, guest bedrooms, and cabins on a ship	Hotels: 1 star: Tourist 2 stars: Economy 3 stars: Standard 4 stars: First class 5 stars: Luxury
6	Denmark	Hotels, hostels	1-5 stars
7	Estonia	Hotels, motels, guest houses, hostels, touristic villages and holiday camps, apartments for visitors, and B&B	Hotels: 1-5 stars Motels: 1-3 stars
8	Finland	Hotels	Not applicable
9	France	Hotels, camping, hostels, tourism rooms, vacation villages, touristic residential villages, hotel prefectures, and residential entertainment parks Hotels: (1) classified based on regulations until 2009: touristic hotels, touristic residences; and (2) classified based on regulations available from July 2009: hotels	Until 2012, we identify two types of categories of hotel classification: (1) Hotels classified based on the regulations until July 2009: (a) touristic hotels: 1-4 stars as luxury (b) Hotel prefectures: 0 star. (c) Touristic residences: 1-4 stars (2) Hotels classified based on the regulations from July 2009: 1-5 stars
10	Germany	Hotels G-classification: guest houses, taverns, inns, pensions, etc.	Hotels: 1 star: Tourist 2 stars: Standard 3 stars: Comfort 4 stars: First class 5 stars: Luxury
11	Greece	Main structures: standard hotels, motels, apartments with furniture, mixed type hotels, and camping facilities Secondary structures: rooms for rent, apartments with furniture, and furnished houses and mansions	Hotels, apartments with furniture, and houses for rent: 1-5 stars Camping: A, B, and C categories

(Table 2 continued)

No.	Country	Type of tourist accommodation structures	Classification category/type of structures
12	Ireland	Hotels, guest houses, hostels for vacation, hostels for youth, vacation camps, camping sites, vacation houses, and vacation apartments	Hotels: 1-5 stars Guest houses: 1-4 stars There are also hotels and guest houses unclassified, with the symbols U, N, and R
13	Italy	There are four macro-categories: (1) Hospitality establishments: Hotels, residencies (2) Non-hospitality establishments: B&B, hostels for youth, private houses, and alpine refuges (3) Outdoor establishments: touristic villages, camping (4) These categories can differ from one region to another	Hotels: two types of classification system at a regional level (21 regions): (1) The majority of the regions have adopted a system based on six categories of classification: from 1 to 5 stars deluxe, based on a minimum score for each category (2) Ten regions are using a system based on five categories of classification: from 1 to 4 stars deluxe based on the mandatory classification criteria
14	Latvia	Hotels, guest houses, and motels Other categories: Camping sites, hostels for youth	Hotels: 1-5 stars Guest houses, motels: I-IV categories Camping sites, hostels for youth: I-III categories
15	Lithuania	Hotels, motels, and guest houses Other structures: Camping, rest houses, sanatorium, sanitarium health centers, touristic centers, free time houses, and hostels for youth	Hotels: 1-5 stars Guest houses: 1-4 stars
16	Luxembourg	Hotels, hotel apartments	1-5 stars
17	Malta	Hotels, aparthotels, vacation villages, guest houses, hostels, and B&B establishment	Hotels: 2-5 stars Aparthotels: 2-5 stars Vacation villages: 2-5 stars Guest houses: standard or comfort Hostels: standard B&B establishment: 2-3 stars
18	Great Britain	Hotels: rural hotels, urban hotels, mini-hotels, and metro-hotels Guest accommodation structures: B&B, guest houses, farm houses, inns, restaurants with rooms, and campus Hostels: group hostels, housing activities, sleeping cabins, and camping barns Self-catering: apartments, authorized vacation trailers Ships: boats, cruise ships, and floating hotels Vacation parks: touristic parks, camping, and touristic villages	There are four classification systems for: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Most of the systems are based on the star system Hotels: (1) England: 1-5 stars (2) Scotland and Wales: 0-5 classes: (a) Class 0: AA 1 star (b) Class 1: AA 1 star (c) Class 2: AA 2 stars (d) Class 3: AA 3 stars (e) Class 4: AA 4 stars (f) Class 5: AA 5 stars
19	The Netherlands	Hotel, camping, and bungalow parks	Hotels: 1-5 stars
20	Poland	Hotels, motels, pensions/guest houses, camping, houses for tourists, hostels for youth, hostels, and bivouac	Hotels, motels, and pensions: 1-5 stars Camping: 1-4 stars Guest houses, houses for tourists, and hostels for youth: I-III categories
21	Portugal	Structures of tourist accommodation: hotels, hotel apartments, inns, touristic villages, touristic apartments, resorts, vacation villas, structures of tourist accommodation placed in the rural areas (houses, structures for agro-tourism, and rural hotels), camping, and trailers Units of local housing	Structures of tourist accommodation: (1) Hotels, hotel apartments: 1-5 stars (2) Inns: (a) located in a national monument building or public interest: 4 stars; and (b) located in a building of a local or public regional interest with historic or architectural value: 3 stars (3) Touristic villages: 3-5 stars (4) Touristic apartments (vacation): 3-5 stars (5) Resorts: have at least two accommodation structures, one at least of 4 or 5 stars (6) Accommodation structures placed in the rural areas: cabins, structures for agro-tourism, rural hotels, camping, and trailers: 3-5 stars Local units of housing: no classification

(Table 2 continued)

No.	Country	Type of tourist accommodation structures	Classification category/type of structures
22	Romania	Hotels, hotel apartments, motels, hostels, villas, bungalows, touristic cabins, camping, vacation villages, touristic stops, camping houses, pensions, agro-touristic houses, apartments or houses for rent, and accommodation structures with housing on ships	Hotels, villas, and housing structures on ships: 1-5 stars Hotel apartments: 2-5 stars Motels, hostels, bungalows, touristic cabins, and apartments or rooms for rent: 1-3 stars Camping, vacation villages, touristic stops, and camping housing: 1-4 stars Touristic pensions and agro-touristic houses: 1-5 stars/flowers
23	Slovakia	Hotels (different categories), boatels, guest houses, apartment houses, touristic hostels, vacation villages, campground, camping sites, and private housing	Hotels (different categories) and boatels: 1-5 stars Guest houses: standard and budget (economic), which correspond to the hotel classification categories of 1, 2, and 3 stars Apartment houses: 2-3 stars Touristic hostels and vacation villages: economic level, medium, and superior Campground and camping sites: four classes of classification Private housing: rural tourism and agro-tourism
24	Slovenia	Hotels, motels, pensions, inns, youth camps, apartments, vacation houses, private rooms, accommodation at a farm house, and marinas	Hotels: 1-5 stars Youth camps: 1-5 stars Motels, pensions, inns, vacation houses, and private rooms: 1-4 stars Accommodation at a farm house: 1-4 apples
25	Spain	Hotels, Hotel Garni, hotel apartments condominium, motels, boatels, rotels, hostels, camping, private rooms, refuges, guest houses, rural houses, cruise ships, and resorts	Hotels: 1-5 stars Secondary group: (1) Private rooms and rural houses: 1-3 stars (2) Hostels: 1-3 stars (3) Motels: correspond to 2-star hotels (4) Guest houses: no category In some regions, in the classification system, a "superior class" can be included for the superior level hotels: golden stars, and for private rooms, rural houses, and hostels: silver stars
26	Sweden	Hotels, Hotel Garni	1-5 stars
27	Hungary	Hotels: (1) classified based on the mandatory rules: hotels, hydropathic hotels, wellness hotels, Hotel Garni, and hotel apartments (2) classified based on Hotelstars, starting with 2010: hotels Other structures: pensions, camping, vacation houses, hostels, and touristic pensions	Hotels classified based on the mandatory rules: (1) Hotels: 1-5 stars (2) Hydropathic hotels: 2-5 stars (3) Wellness hotels: 3-5 stars (4) Hotel Garni: 1-4 stars (5) Hotel apartments: 3-5 stars Hotels classified based on Hotelstars system which is implemented in 2010: (1) 1 star: Tourist (2) 2 stars: Economy (3) 3 stars: Standard (4) 4 stars: First class (5) 5 stars: Luxury
28	Croatia	Hotels, hotel apartments, camping, and other types of accommodation structures: hostels, rooms, and apartments	1-5 stars

Note. Source: Adapted from The European Consumer Centres' Network (2009).

Analysis of the establishments of tourist accommodation and their classification categories used in the EU member states leads to the following conclusions.

There is a diversity of structures with functions of tourist accommodation which are different and they have specific nomination categories differing from country to country.

Establishments of tourist accommodation can be divided into three main classes:

(1) Hotel structures;

(2) Non-hotel structures;

(3) Outdoor structures.

We believe that each main class corresponds to the following main types of structures with functions of tourist accommodation:

(1) Hotel structures: hotels;

(2) Non-hotel structures:

(a) Pension B&B;

(b) Hostels;

(c) Cabins;

(d) Apartments and touristic rooms.

(3) Outdoor structures: camping.

Hotels, as the main structure of touristic accommodation, can have the following sub-types:

(1) Hotels;

(2) Hotel apartments;

(3) Motels;

(4) Specialized hotels: vacation, business, conferences, health and wellness;

(5) Floating hotels (boatels);

(6) Unique hotels (boutique hotels);

(7) Resorts.

Regarding the classification system with functions of tourist accommodation in most EU countries, this is based on the star system, which can range from 1 to 5 stars (except in Italy, where, in most regions, for the hotel classification system is used a system based on six categories, from 1 star to 5 star deluxe, and the other 10 regions, a system based on five categories, from 1 star to 4 star deluxe), but other systems are encountered, such as system categories (in Cyprus, hotel apartments, tourist villages, and villas are classified by categories: Deluxe, A, B, and C; in Latvia, motels and guest houses are graded from I to IV), on classes (for classification of hotels in Scotland and Wales: Class 0-5), on flowers (for classification of guesthouses in Romania, from 1 to 5 flowers), on apples (for classifying farm house accommodation in Slovenia, from 1 to 4 apples) etc., but we identify the use of a higher class (in countries using the Hotelstars system, the supplement “superior”, or “golden” stars for hotels in Spain, and “silver” stars for rural houses, hostels, and private rooms).

In the EU, not only do the hotel classification systems vary from country to country, but there is also a significant diversity in the level of comfort related to the level and criteria of classification, which differ from one state to another, an aspect that complicates even more the accuracy of the information provided by the ranking system in the eyes of tourists.

This is the reason why one of the priorities in the field tourism is to improve the quality of tourism by harmonizing the classification standards in the field.

Quality Mark in Hospitality

In its working schedule, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2003) operates with the quality concept in tourism, defined as:

> The result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate product and service needs, requirements, and expectations of the consumer, at an acceptable price, in conformity with mutually accepted contractual conditions and the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity, and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment[1].

The quality mark in the hotel industry is an instrument that evaluates the quality of the work done by tourism providers, in relation to a predetermined set of standards through which written and formalized procedures are made, which helps companies evaluate the service quality, with regard to the expectations and the needs of tourists. The quality mark is awarded through a mark certificate, issued by an authorized body in the respective field, receiving the mark that represents an attestation and a guarantee for the high quality of tourism services and products offered.

The quality mark is a model of good practices for implementing and certifying the quality of hotel services, as a voluntary option of the economic operators in the field.

The purpose of the quality mark is to improve the quality of services provided by the hotel accommodations for raising the satisfaction level of clients and for guaranteeing that they will benefit in any evaluated and certified hotel accommodation, from a high level of quality services, regardless of the accommodation category.

The quality mark's objectives in the hospitality field are as follows:

(1) Developing and applying the model of best practices for implementing and certifying the quality of hotel services, for generating the satisfaction of customers, and for developing the competitiveness of hotel accommodations, by harmonizing the hotel services with the needs, expectations, and requirements of users;

(2) Application, inside the hotel industry, of an internal and external service quality system, a system to become an effective management tool, designed to develop the quality of provided services.

The quality mark's principles refer to the following aspects:

(1) The mark will favor the use of standards ("what do I do?") with operating procedures ("how do I do?");

(2) The marking will be done uniformly;

(3) Implementation of the mark in as many categories of hotel units as possible;

(4) Voluntary procedures, so that the management of every hotel will decide if they want to implement and apply for the quality mark.

Brand quality for hotel accommodations is created by starting from the steps contained in the tourism value chain (reservation, arrival, room, stay, pay, and the contact after the visit), and the elements from every step will represent the quality criteria. These criteria will be used for estimating the quality level of the services, and in the end, for applying the mark or not.

The basis of such a model of good practices, for implementing and certifying the hotel service quality, is the criteria for: management, staff performances, accessibility/location, building facade/exterior spaces/parking lot, common areas, hotel lobby/reception, rooms/bathrooms, breakfast/restaurant/bar/room service, customer services, supply, and communication.

The quality mark of the hotel industry has the following features:

[1] Retrieved from http://www.sdt.unwto.org/en/content/quality-tourism.

(1) In order to cover the whole diversity of the hotel unit, the brand must be configured on a whole set of criteria (and not just on a few criteria);

(2) The criteria of the brand must be relevant, well-defined, and depend on the present and future expectations of the customers;

(3) The mark must be transparent and must point out in a clear way the level of the realized service;

(4) The mark must differentiate, in a clear and convincing way, the high-end hotels from the low-tier ones;

(5) The mark must be easy to manage and adaptable to future changes;

(6) The mark must be just and objective.

"The symbol stating that the hotel is entrusted with providing quality hotel services"[2] can be defined as the quality label.

In the EU, the European Committee is currently working an umbrella European tourism label for quality schemes (European Commission, 2014), to:

(1) Increase consumer security and confidence in tourism products;

(2) Encourage tourism professionals who make genuine efforts to improve services.

At present, there are many existing quality schemes for hospitality sectors across Europe, which vary greatly in terms of scope, assessment criteria, and procedures (see Table 3).

Table 3

Quality Schemes for Hospitality Sectors in the EU Member States

No.	State	Quality mark/scheme	Organization
1	Bulgaria	Authentic Bulgaria	Private
2	Czech Republic	NTQS: National Tourism Quality System	Public
3	Denmark	Active Denmark	Public-private cooperation
4	Estonia	Estonian Tourism Quality Programme (People Committed to Quality)	Public
5	Finland	Destination Quality Net (DQN) Program Quality 1Q00	Public-private cooperation
6	France	Qualité Tourisme Camping Qualité	Public-private cooperation
7	Germany	Service Qualität Deutschland	Private
8	Greece	Q label	Private
9	Ireland	Quality Assurance	Public
10	Italy	Ospitalità Italiana	Private
12	Great Britain	Visit Wales	Public
13	Spain	SICTED[3]: Calidad Turistica	Public-private cooperation
14	Sweden	Sustainable Travel Industry Sweden	Private
15	Hungary	Hungarian Tourism Quality Award	Private

We can also identify the quality mark European Hospitality Quality, developed by HOTREC (2013) and applied in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, and Sweden, as well as Hostelling International Quality, developed by Hostelling International Association, acting globally for hostels.

[2] Government Decision No. 668/05.06.2003 on the national program to increase the quality of hotel services and the launch of "Q" mark (Ministry of Tourism, 2003).

[3] Program aimed to improve the quality of tourist destinations by working with tourism companies/services in the up to 29 different categories that make up the experience and satisfaction a tourist has visiting each destination (Grand Canaria, 2013). Retrieved from http://www.grancanaria.com/patronato_turismo/sicted_en.0.html#sthash.ap2WoBsk.dpuf.

Analyzing the existence of quality types of hotel brands in the member states of the EU, we find the presence of such a system in 15 states.

The analysis of quality hotel brands existing in the member states of the EU, from its nature point of view, emphasizes the fact that in six states, the system is given by the private organizations, in five states, the mark is given through a quality official system, and in four states, the public-private cooperation system can be found.

Each quality scheme is characterized by different criteria used to measure the quality and therefore to grant the label. Among all possible criteria, those directly concerning the features of the services provided are the most important. All quality schemes usually measure the quality through customer satisfaction survey, and the presence of a system to constantly control the quality for tourists is necessary. Many labels check the level, number and efficiency of the facilities, and other amenities available for tourists. Also important is the implementation of human resource policies for improving the quality of them and checking the truthfulness of advertising messages and other forms of communication.

Comparative Analysis of Classification System of Hotel Classification and Quality Label in Hospitality

Next, we perform a comparative analysis of hotel classification system and quality label in hospitality, using a set of 10 analysis criteria: definition, foundation, scope, regulation, purpose, objectives, typology of system, characteristics, features criteria, and benefits (see Table 4).

Table 4

Comparative Analysis of Hotel Classification System and Quality Label in Hospitality

No.	Analysis criteria	Classification system of tourist accommodation	Quality mark
1	Definition	A coded form of synthesis of comfort level and range of services	The symbol stating that the hotel is entrusted with providing quality hotel services
2	Foundation	Foundation on notoriety, moral climate, and a set of standards of services and facilities	Model of best practices for implementation and certification of hotel services quality
3	Scope	It differs from country to country There are few countries that have not adopted a classification system	It is applied in some countries to reach a quality standard to match the requirements of tourists
4	Regulation	Compulsory/voluntary	Voluntary
5	Purpose	Synthesis of the comfort level and the range of services related to the respective category	Improving service quality of hotel units in order to increase the level of customer satisfaction and to ensure them that they will benefit by a high level of service quality, regardless of the category of the unit, in any of the evaluated and certified hotel units
6	Objectives	Informing customers The ability to distinguish tourist accommodations by implementing differentiated policies A possible tariff regulation Facilitating communication, concluding contracts, and monitoring their compliance, in the relationship between hotels and travel agencies	Development and implementation of a model of best practices for the implementation and certification of hotel services quality, to generate customer satisfaction and development of hotel units competitiveness, by harmonizing hotel services with needs, expectations, and requirements of users Application, within the hotel industry, of a system of internal and external evaluation of the quality of services provided, a system that will become an effective management tool, designed to develop the level of quality of services provided

(Table 4 continued)

No.	Analysis criteria	Classification system of tourist accommodation	Quality mark
7	Typology of system	In most states, it is based on the star system, which can range from 1 to 5 stars (except in Italy), but there are other systems, such as the category system (in Cyprus), class system (Scotland and Wales), on flowers (Romania), on apples (Slovenia), and others, but we identify the use of a higher class (Hotelstars system: superior; in Spain: gold stars; or silver stars)	It is based on assigning the mark, the symbol. Also, there are quality brands that comprise several categories (Switzerland: 3 categories)
8	Characteristics	Category classification is determined by the fulfillment of requirements and classification criteria, specific to each type of structure and classification category	It will favor the use of standards ("what do I do?") with operating procedures ("how do I do?"). Quality mark for hotel units will be created from the stages contained in the tourism value chain (reservation dates, room, stay, payment, and contact after visit), and the elements of each stage will be the quality criteria. These criteria will be used to appreciate the level of services quality, and finally to apply or not the mark
9	Features criteria	Classification criteria of tourist accommodation shall take into account: (1) The comfort level (2) Territorial location (3) Motivation of functionality (4) Duration of stay (5) The operating mode of the system (6) Form of ownership (7) Form of exploitation (8) Capacity (9) Market target (10) The standard of services and facilities offered	Basis of such a model of best practice for the implementation and quality certification of hotel services shall constitute criteria concerning: (1) Management (2) Performances staff (3) Accessibility/"SL" position (4) Building facade/exterior spaces/parking lot (5) Common areas (6) Hotel lobby/reception (7) Rooms/bathrooms (8) Breakfast/restaurant/bar/room service (9) Customer services (10) Supply (11) Communication
10	Benefits	Providing direct channels of promotion, control, and safety standards that are consistent with tourist expectations Contribution to the formation of the image of confidence	Improving the image of the hotel Efficiency of activities and services Customer loyalty Reducing costs Increasing labor productivity

Conclusions

Hotel classification is a coded form of synthesis of comfort level and range of services, and the quality label is a model of good practices for implementation and certification of the hotel services quality. The classification system may be compulsory or voluntary (varies from country to country), while the quality mark is always voluntary. Classification of hotels is based on the star system (1-5 stars), and the quality brand is based on awarding the quality mark symbol. Objectives taken into account by adopting a system of classification refer to: tourists information, the possibility of contrast of hotels by implementing a differentiated policy, facilitate communication, conclusion of contracts, and monitoring compliance with the relationship between hotels and tourists, while the objectives envisaged through the adoption of a quality brand relate to generate tourist satisfaction, building competitiveness of the tourist accommodation.

Quality certification services by quality mark do not intend to replace administrative classification or standards in force, but intend to supplement them, and in the long term, harmonize various existing categories and sub-categories, rather heterogeneous tourist market at present. For this purpose, the services offered by the tourist accommodation are evaluated in terms of the customer. Thus, the tourist accommodation must not only declare a list of facilities and services, but also deliver them to certain quality standards.

References

Centre for European Policy Studies. (2012). *Estimated impacts of possible options and legal instruments of the umbrella European tourism label for quality schemes*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6236&lang=en

European Commission. (2014). *European tourism quality principles*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/quality-label/index_en.htm

Foris, D. (2010). Authority and public administration in tourism (Ph.D. thesis, the National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest).

Foris, D. (2011). *Regulation of tourist activities* (p. 17). Braşov: Publishing Lux Libris.

Grand Canaria. (2013). *What is SICTED*? Retrieved from http://www.grancanaria.com/patronato_turismo/sicted_en.0.html

Hotels, Restaurants, & Cafés in Europe [HOTREC]. (2013). *European hospitality quality*. Retrieved from http://www.hotrec.eu/policy-issues/quality.aspx

Ministry of Tourism. (2003). *Government Decision No. 668/05.06.2003 on the national program to increase the quality of hotel services and the launch of Romanian "Q" mark*. Government Printing Office M. O. No. 424/17.06.2003.

The European Consumer Centres' Network. (2009). *Classification of hotel establishments within the EU*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/hotel_establishment_classification_EU_en.pdf

United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO]. (2003). *Quality in tourism*. Quality Support Committee at its sixth meeting, Varadero, Cuba. Retrieved from http://sdt.unwto.org/en/content/quality-tourism

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, ISSN 2328-2169
January 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, 40-47

What European Incubators Can Learn From Their American Counterparts: An Analysis of the Critical Success Factors for a Startup Incubator

Lohithaksha Chengappa
Stanford University, Stanford, USA
Richard C. Geibel
Fresenius University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, Germany

This study suggests a theoretical component to the thus far proposed explanations of what makes a startup incubator successful in enabling entrepreneurial activity. Departing from a traditional focus on industry- and nation-wide resources, we develop a framework of the critical success factors for a startup incubator and a scoring mechanism to evaluate the success of existing startup incubators using these factors. We score a selection of American and European incubators using the developed scoring mechanism and comparatively benchmark the European incubators against the American ones to identify areas for improvement. Our findings suggest that European incubators, while relatively strong overall, can look to and learn from their American counterparts in certain areas. Importantly, these improvement areas are not specific to characteristics of any individual European incubator, but to European incubators overall. Finally, we aim to expand this study to other entrepreneurship hubs worldwide and we outline a plan of action to enable this expansion.

Keywords: critical success factors, incubator scoring mechanism, American startup incubator, European startup incubator, comparative benchmarking, areas for improvement, incubator best practices

Introduction

Startup incubators play an important role in enabling entrepreneurial activity in the communities that they serve. They are designed to assist entrepreneurs, usually with a focus on high-technology and the internet, in the establishment of new firms (Lee & Osteryoung, 2004). Startup incubators provide a diverse plethora of services and support to startups and seek to connect talent, technology, capital, and expertise to accelerate the growth of new ventures and thus, quicken the commercialization of technology (Smilor, Gibson, & Dietrich, 1990).

Traditionally, incubators in Europe have been seen as those bodies or organizations that provide a medium to high level of management support to new companies that possess a medium to high level of technological sophistication (Aerts, Matthyssens, & Vandenbempt, 2007). However, most recently, the “accelerator” model of incubation has become popular, especially in the US, where a number of the most widely known incubators

Lohithaksha Chengappa, master student, Department of Management Science and Engineering, Stanford University. Email: lohith@stanford.edu.
Richard C. Geibel, professor, International Business School, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences.

run completely on an accelerator model (van Huijgevoort, 2012). The accelerator model works on enabling the rapid growth of startups in usually 3-6 months through the provision of seed capital, extensive mentorship, and constant feedback, finally culminating in a “demo” day where the startups pitch their business to an audience of investors (Fishback, Gulbranson, Litan, Mitchell, & Porzig, 2007).

Given the large number of incubators that have been established and are being established in Europe, the US, and worldwide, a theoretical foundation for the proposed explanations of what makes a startup incubator successful in enabling entrepreneurial activity is imperative. Existing literatures on the successful operations and management of a startup incubator tend to focus on the effective and efficient management of the incubator itself but often fail to expansively examine the inter-disciplinary factors that contribute to an incubator’s success. Also, a scoring mechanism for incubators to benchmark themselves against globally successful incubators has not been established. Hence, there is a need to comprehensively identify and examine the critical success factors that make an incubator successful as well as develop a scoring mechanism to allow incubators to benchmark themselves against other incubators.

Critical Success Factors

Critical success factor is the term used to define an element or factor that is necessary for an organization to achieve its mission and hence, be successful (Rockart, 1979). In order to understand the critical success factors behind a successful startup incubator, we performed an extensive literature review and observatory study to analyze and understand the various best practices from around the world. Based on our literature review and observations, we developed a framework of 12 critical success factors and mapped them into a matrix of four dimensional groups as shown in Table 1. The four dimensional groups represent the four dimensional areas in which every incubator needs to be competent. The four dimensional groups allow for an easy comparison among incubators as well as for a clear identification of areas for improvement.

Weightage for Each Critical Success Factor

Research revealed that each critical success factor and hence, each dimensional group, contributes equally to the success of an incubator and therefore, they are all weighed equally in the scoring mechanism that we introduce as part of this study. Although it is widely believed that adequate funding and favorable exits are the most important factors that contribute to the successfulness of a startup incubator, we discerned that no factor is substantially more significant than any other and thus, weighed them all equally. This will also ensure that incubators that benchmark themselves using the scoring mechanism in this study will be able to receive a holistic analysis of their current states.

Table 1

Critical Success Factors Matrix for a Startup Incubator

Dimension	Quantitative	Qualitative
Internal	Dimensional group 1 (DG1): internal-quantitative 1. Magnitude and nature of funding available to the incubator 2. Scope of co-working space 3. Business model, focus, and strategic plan of incubator	Dimensional group 2 (DG2): internal-qualitative 1. Geographical location 2. Prior entrepreneurial experience of an incubator’s founders and managers 3. Ability to accelerate startups within a short time span
External	Dimensional group 3 (DG3): external-quantitative 1. Ability to reduce transaction costs for downstream deals 2. Timely and favorable exits 3. Access to auxiliary resources and relevant talent pool	Dimensional group 4 (DG4): external-qualitative 1. Visibility and brand of the incubator 2. Network with the entrepreneurial and business community 3. Ability to attract and identify high-potential startups

Methodology

This study of the critical success factors behind a startup incubator was performed in two parts. In the first part, we identified and mapped into four dimensional groups the critical success factors for a successful startup incubator. In the second part of this study, we developed a scoring mechanism based on the critical success factors that we identified and scored a selection of American and European incubators using this scoring mechanism. We then compared the average American and European scores to identify areas for improvement where the European incubators can learn from the American ones. Finally, we developed a plan to further expand this study to entrepreneurship hubs across the world and to enable incubators to benchmark themselves against the ones from across the world.

Scoring Mechanism

Each incubator is scored on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest on each of the 12 critical success factors. Within each dimensional group, a best practice incubator was identified and given a score of 10 for each of the critical success factors in that group and every other incubator is scored relative to the best practice incubator.

The scores for each of the critical success factors in each dimensional group are then averaged, and a composite score for each dimensional group is obtained for each incubator. The composite scores of the four dimensional groups are then averaged to determine the overall score for an incubator. This is the general scoring mechanism that we developed in this study. Furthermore, to allow for a comparison between American and European incubators, all the overall scores for the American incubators were averaged to obtain an American benchmark and all the overall scores for the European incubators were averaged to obtain a European benchmark.

Selection of American Incubators

For the purposes of this study, we identified a selection of 10 American incubators from across the US that represents a wide variety of business models, focuses, and geographical locations. This selection of incubators is also consistently considered to be amongst the top incubators in America (Smytan, 2012) and will allow us to compare the European incubators against a relatively high standard (Gruber, 2012). The 10 American incubators selected are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

American Incubators Selected for Study

Name of incubator	Location
DreamIt Ventures	Philadelphia, PA, USA
Tech Wildcatter	Dallas, TX, USA
AngelPad	San Francisco, CA, USA
Y Combinator	Mountain View, CA, USA
Excellerate Labs	Chicago, IL, USA
Launchpad LA	Los Angeles, CA, USA
TechStars	Boulder, CO, USA
Kicklabs	San Francisco, CA, USA
Capital Factory	Austin, TX, USA
500 Startups	Mountain View, CA, USA

Representative Best Practices

We identified an American incubator as representative of the best practice for each of the four dimensional groups. It is important to note that we did not perform a complete review of all American incubators. For the purposes of this study, it was sufficient to identify incubators that may not necessarily be the absolute overall optimum but rather a relative best practice as compared to their peers being scored. This enabled us to develop our scoring mechanism accordingly and ensured that our scoring mechanism is not constrained by any one specific incubator's characteristics but comprehensively includes the representative best practices for each of the four dimensional groups. The incubators selected as the representative best practices are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Representative Best Practices

Dimension	Quantitative	Qualitative
Internal	Dimensional group 1 (DG1): internal-quantitative 500 Startups, Mountain View, CA, USA	Dimensional group 2 (DG2): internal-qualitative TechStars, Boulder, CO, USA
External	Dimensional group 3 (DG3): external-quantitative Kicklabs, San Francisco, CA, USA	Dimensional group 4 (DG4): external-qualitative Y Combinator, Mountain View, CA, USA

When scoring the incubators in each of the four dimensional fields, the representative best practice incubators are given a full score of 10 for all the critical success factors in that dimensional group and all other incubators are scored relative to them. This allows us to objectively score incubators in relation to the best practice incubators present today. This also provides a benchmark for incubators using our scoring mechanism to score themselves against other incubators.

Selection of European Incubators

We identified a selection of six incubators in Cologne, Germany in order to represent European incubators for the first phase of this study. These six incubators were selected because, as with the American incubators selected, they represent diverse business models and focuses. They are also located in close proximity to our location, which allows us to collect detailed first-hand empirical data from them. Cologne, along with Berlin, is an entrepreneurial hub in Germany and Western Europe, and it is ideally placed to study entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region, of which Cologne is the largest city, has the third highest gross domestic product (GDP) of all metropolitan regions in Europe, next only to the Paris metropolitan area and the Greater London region, illustrating the importance of the region on the global entrepreneurial landscape (European Commission, 2013). The six incubators selected from Cologne, Germany serve as a starting point for this on-going study, and data from other entrepreneurship hubs including Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg are in the process of being collected. The six European incubators selected for the first phase of this study are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

European Incubators Selected for the First Phase of Study

Name of incubator	Location
Startplatz	Cologne, NRW, Germany
Entrepreneurship Center Köln (ECK)	Cologne, NRW, Germany
Clusterhaus	Cologne, NRW, Germany
Betahaus	Cologne, NRW, Germany
Betafabrik	Cologne, NRW, Germany
Solution Space	Cologne, NRW, Germany

Scoring of American and European Incubators

As data were not directly available from the selected American incubators, we reconstructed information and scored the incubators using a combination of publically available data and proprietary databases. The European incubators were scored using data obtained through in-person structured and unstructured interviews with the incubators' founders and managers, startups present at the incubators, and the general entrepreneurial community. Looking ahead, we aim to collect more empirical data from the incubators involved in this study through a mixture of online surveys and in-person structured interviews. These data will then be used to revisit the scores for the incubators and further refine the scoring mechanism.

Results

The American and European incubators were scored based on the scoring mechanism developed as part of this study. The scores are not implied to be taken as an absolute but rather as a starting point for the benchmarking of incubators. As with any scoring process, the scores are bound to be subjective although they are aimed at being objective. We would like to point out that the scores on their own mean little, and it is the comparison of the scores of different incubators that yields interesting results. In the case of this present study, through our scoring process, we identified areas where European incubators can improve in comparison with the American ones. This information is highly valuable from the point of view of multiple stakeholders, including incubator founders, managers, business angels, investors, startups, and government bodies in Europe.

Scoring of American and European Incubators

The selected American and European incubators were scored according to the scoring mechanism developed, and the detailed results of the scoring process are presented in Figures 1 and 2 respectively. The names of the incubators in Figures 1 and 2 are concealed for confidentiality reasons, and the incubators are not in the order as listed in Tables 2 and 4.

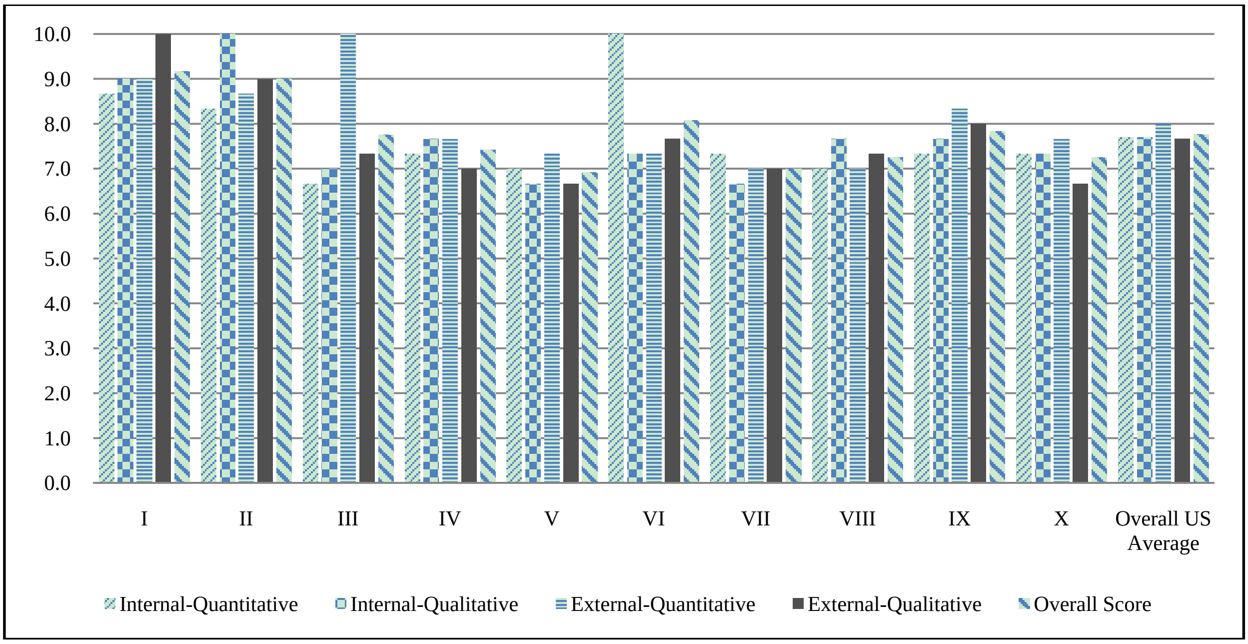

Figure 1. Detailed score results for the American incubators.

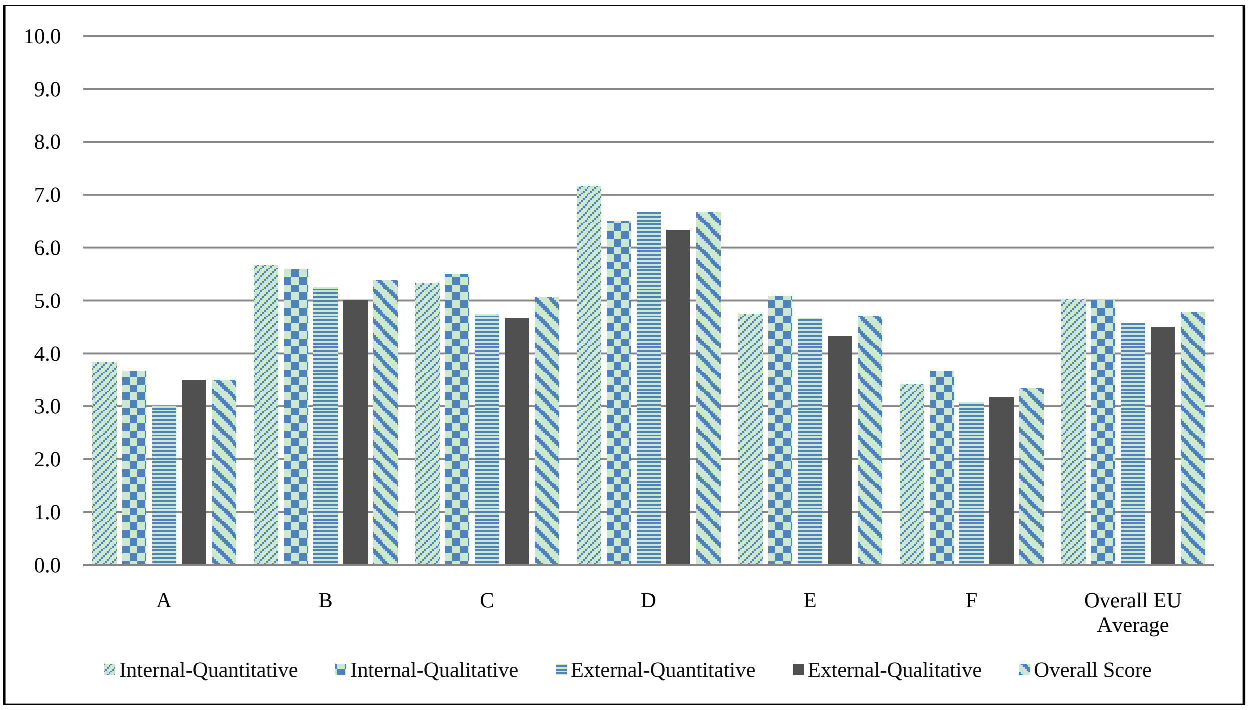

Figure 2. Detailed score results for the European incubators.

Comparison of American and European Incubators

The detailed scores of the American and European incubators were compared and this comparison is illustrated in Figure 3.

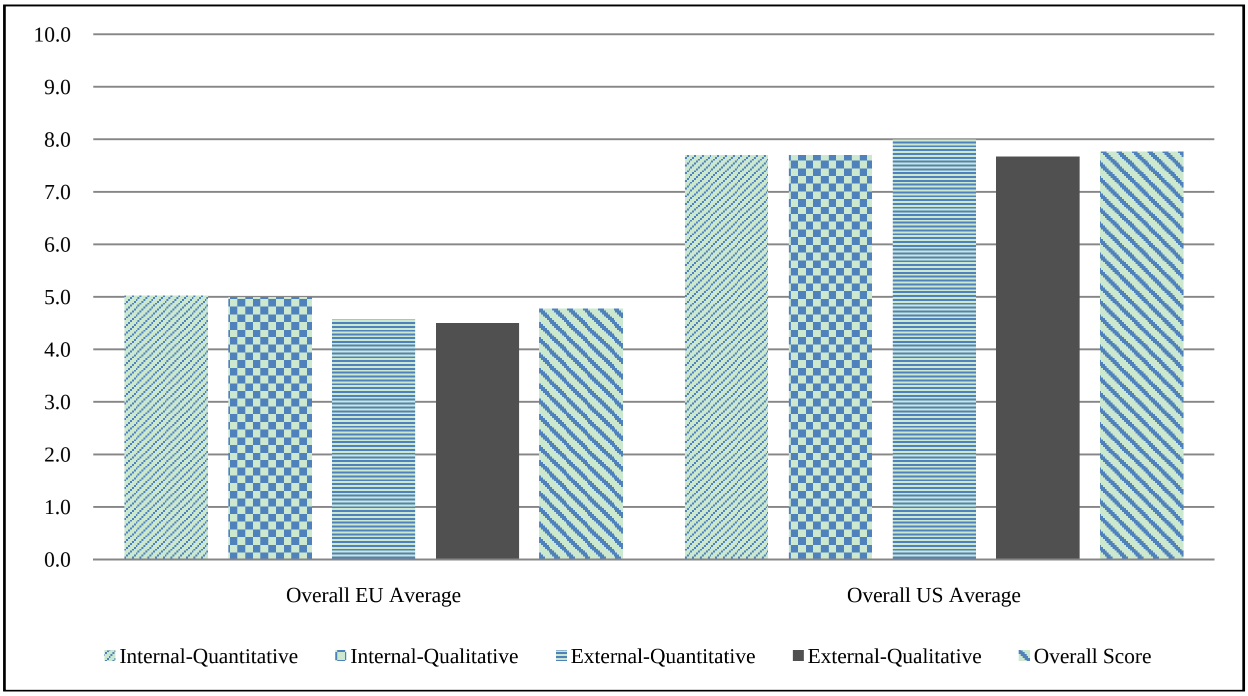

Figure 3. Comparison of the detailed scores.

Areas of Improvement for European Incubators

As can be seen from Figure 3, the biggest areas for improvement for European incubators are in dimensional groups 3 and 4, that is, the external dimensional groups. There is scope for improvement in dimensional groups 1 and 2 as well, but bigger yields can be first obtained from improving dimensional groups 3 and 4. The top six critical success factors were ordered according to the score differences between the European and American incubator averages and they are detailed in Table 5.

Based on the first phase of our study, we recommend that European incubators, especially in Cologne, Germany, focus on possible improvements in the external dimensional groups and overall, focus on improvements in the order of the critical success factors detailed in Table 5. This will allow the incubators to reap the biggest improvements and become more successful in enabling entrepreneurial activity.

This will also allow the European incubators to become more competitive internationally and close the gap with top American incubators which are without doubt the current global benchmark. Overall, our study suggests that American incubators are on average 37% better than the European ones in successfully enabling entrepreneurial activity, which indicates that European incubators, while relatively strong, can learn considerably from their American counterparts.

It is imperative to note, however, that some of the European incubators selected in this study might lean closer to the traditional definition of a co-working space and hence, the resulting European average scores might be skewed lower due to this reason. Beyond the scoring of incubators, the important part is the identification of areas for improvement and this study provides a crucial first step in that direction.

Table 5

Top Critical Success Factors by Score Difference

Score difference rank	Critical success factor
1	Ability to accelerate startups within a short time span
2	Timely and favorable exits
3	Ability to reduce transaction costs for downstream deals
4	Network with the entrepreneurial and business community
5	Ability to attract and identify high-potential startups
6	Magnitude and nature of funding available to the incubator

Conclusions

A direct comparison of American and European incubators shows that there are two main differences between both approaches. In the US, it is easier for a high-potential startup to collect venture capital, and for the investors, it is easier to earn money with successful exits. Therefore, American incubators more often act as an accelerator with the clear financial strategy, whereas European incubators tend to focus more on a supporting and facilitating strategy.

Future Work

The next step in this study is to collect more empirical data from the incubators involved in this study through a combination of online surveys and in-person structured interviews with the various incubators' founders and managers, portfolio startups, and the greater entrepreneurship community. We will use these data to refine our scoring mechanism and revisit our scores for the incubators. Subsequently, we aim to extend this

study to other entrepreneurship hubs in Europe comprising Paris, London, Copenhagen, Oslo (Aurmo, 2011), and Berlin, and in Asia including Singapore, Bangalore, Shenzhen, and Tel Aviv. This will allow us to globally analyze startup incubators and establish global and regional benchmarks against which incubators from across the world can compare themselves. This will also expand our scope to identify incubator best practices and possibly establish new representative best practices.

References

Aerts, K., Matthyssens, P., & Vandenbempt, K. (2007). Critical role and screening practices of European business incubators. *Technovation, 27*(5), 254-267.

Aurmo, V. B. (2011). *Sustainable performance of business start-ups: Case studies of Nordic business incubators in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland*. LAP Lambert Academic Publishing.

European Commission. (2013). *Eurostat city statistics: Urban audit database*. European Commission. Retrieved from http://www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/city_urban/data_cities/database_sub1

Fishback, B., Gulbranson, C. A., Litan, R. E., Mitchell, L., & Porzig, M. A. (2007). *Finding business "idols": A new model to accelerate start-ups*. Retrieved from http://www.dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1001926

Gruber, F. (2012). *Top 15 US startup accelerators ranked; Y Combinator and Techstars on top*. Tech Cocktail. Retrieved from http://www.tech.co/top-startup-accelerators-ranked-2012-08

Lee, S. S., & Osteryoung, J. S. (2004). A comparison of critical success factors for effective operations of university business incubators in the United States and Korea. *Journal of Small Business Management, 42*(4), 418-426.

Rockart, J. F. (1979). Chief executives define their own data needs. *Harvard Business Review, 57*(2), 81-93.

Smilor, R. W., Gibson, D. V., & Dietrich, G. B. (1990). University spin-out companies: Technology start-ups from UT-Austin. *Journal of Business Venturing, 5*(1), 63-76.

Smytan, M. (2012). *Where to get help and money for startups in California. The complete guide: Angel investors, accelerators, incubators for seed and early-stage funding*.

van Huijgevoort, T. (2012). The "business accelerator": Just a different name for a business incubator (Bachelor thesis, Utrecht School of Economics, Utrecht, the Netherlands)?

Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Volume 2, Number 1, January 2014
David Publishing Company
240 Nagle Avenue #15C, New York, NY 10034, USA
Tel: 1-323-984-7526, 323-410-1082; Fax: 1-323-984-7374, 323-908-0457
http://www.davidpublishing.com
tourism@davidpublishing.org, tourism.davidpublishing@hotmail.com

ISSN 2328-2169